

[JANUARY 1, 1871.]

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

[THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 389.—VOL. XVI.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 24, 1870.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ALBUM.]

FAULT ON BOTH SIDES.

A Christmas Story.

CHAPTER IV.

One angry moment often does
What we repent for years;
It works the wrong we ne'er make right
By sorrow or by tears.
It speaks the rude and cruel word
That wounds a feeling breast,
It strikes the reckless, sudden blow,
It breaks the household rest.

Eliza Cook.

CHARLES HARcourt's house, situated a few miles out of London, was in luxuriousness, good taste and elegance well worthy of the man and of his fortune. He was not extravagant, but he chose to have everything around him of the very best, and luckily his means permitted him this indulgence.

House furniture, horses, plate, pictures, everything were as good as money could procure, and Cardross (as the place was called) was, the neighbours all allowed, the very model of what a gentleman's residence should be.

Florence Harcourt, the wife of the City merchant, was in keeping with the establishment. She, too, was refined, elegant, and with exquisite taste; and, moreover, she had the gift of marvellous beauty—beauty that did not lie so much in that classic regularity of feature that makes a perfect marble statue, but in the power of expression.

When her lips moved, and her tongue spoke, her eyes—nay, her whole face spoke at the same time; when pleased, her countenance would light up and sparkle with animation; when angry, every feature expressed scorn and indignation.

A captious critic might possibly have declared her face did not come up to artistic rules of perfection, might have found fault with this, that, and the other, but he would have found but few to agree with him, but few who would care to analyse a face so charming in its completeness.

She was fair—very fair—with hair of that charm-

ing golden hue which ladies, now-a-days, spend so much time and money in endeavouring to produce by artificial means. Her complexion was perfect—clear pink and white, of that exquisite, delicate softness to be found only on a peach or a woman's cheek.

Seen in repose, it is just possible that her countenance might have been deemed too soft, too girlish, too doll-like, but it only needed emotion to light it up with such character and expression as are but rarely seen in one so young, for Florence was but twenty when she married.

Impressive and excitable, she presented the greatest contrast in temperament to her cool, calculating husband, who rarely allowed his feelings, however strong, to show upon the surface.

People wondered that these two should have become man and wife, and by the gossips it was generally supposed that she had married him for his money, he for her pretty face. But, as usual, the gossips were wrong. Never would she have stooped so low, never would she have so lowered herself in her own estimation as to sell herself for gold. She loved Charles Harcourt—or thought she did.

She was the daughter of a country clergyman who died when she was quite a child. Since then she and her sister had lived a secluded life with their widowed mother until a year before her marriage, this parent, too, had died.

It was shortly after she became an orphan that she made Charles Harcourt's acquaintance. During the short period of courtship she had but few opportunities of discovering how strong was her affianced husband's devotion to Mammon. To her he was all that was kind and attentive, and it was not till after they had been married, not till after she had taken up her residence at Cardross as its mistress, that she found how very small was the share she possessed of her husband's heart when put in comparison with the house of business in St. Stylians' Yard.

His whole soul was devoted to trade, his whole thoughts directed to the amassing of pound upon pound, and though he was all that was kind, noble, and generous to her, she missed that love which

she had expected, that devotion for which she had hoped.

Charles Harcourt had no time for tenderness. It never occurred to him that his wife might require more from him than a fine house, magnificent furniture, splendid dresses, and costly horses and carriages.

When he had supplied all these he thought he had done his duty as a husband. Not that he did not love her. In his own way he was sincerely attached to her, and he looked forward vaguely to some distant future when he might be able to devote more of his time to her society; but in the meanwhile her heart was yearning for that love of which poets write and maidens dream, and day by day she was arriving unwillingly at the conclusion that her husband had bought her, as he might have bought a picture, for her prettiness, and that already he was tired of his purchase.

Neither understood the other, and while Florence's heart was near to breaking for want of love, Charles Harcourt, instead of devoting to her a few hours of his time, loaded her with bracelets, rings, and jewellery, all of which were valueless to her as compared with the expressions of affection she could not obtain.

Another thing she had learnt since her marriage. Beneath his calm, cold manner her husband concealed a fierce temper. Never accustomed to contradiction, he could not bear it. The little world of St. Stylians' Yard, in which he lived, was his humble slave, no emperor a greater autocrat than he, and he fain would have carried with him wherever he went the same authority, the same power to command. Thwarted or contradicted, his temper asserted itself—a temper none the less terrible that it was cold, hard, and vindictive, unrelenting and unforgiving.

On Christmas Eve—the same Christmas Eve we made her husband's acquaintance amongst his books and ledgers in St. Stylians' Yard—Florence Harcourt sat alone in the large, handsome drawing-room of Cardross, waiting for the return of Charles from the City.

From time to time she glanced at the clock upon the mantelpiece. It was past eight, and he had promised to return to dinner at seven.

She sighed wearily and looked around her at the luxuriousness by which she was surrounded; but it afforded her no gratification.

The silks and velvets, the gorgeous mirrors, the handsome pictures, conveyed no sense of comfort to her aching heart, and, wheeling the comfortable lounge on which she had been seated close in front of the fire, she fixed her gaze with sorrowing steadfastness upon the glowing coals.

Sympathy was all she needed. She had sought for it and had been repulsed.

Exquisitely beautiful she looked as the red glare of the fire lit up her face and sparkled on the diamonds which glittered on the fair neck, which her low-cut dress displayed to the greatest advantage.

A tiny foot, encased in white satin, rested on the polished steel bar of the fender, and tapped upon it ever and anon impatiently, as her own thoughts grew more and more depressing, as the hands of the clock moved slowly round the dial.

Presently, apparently more from idle listlessness than from design, she took from an elegant table, strewn with books and *nick-nacks*, a large photographic album, the leaves of which she indolently turned over with her jewelled fingers, now looking at one portrait, now at another, till she fixed her gaze upon a vignette of a young and handsome man whose face seemed full of life and expression.

"Ah!" she sighed, "he can love; he knows what love is!"

She let the album rest in her lap, as her eyes, in which the tear-drops glistened, remained riveted on the portrait.

As she uttered these words half aloud her husband entered the room.

His face grew black as night, and his brow contracted with an angry frown. Then softly he came behind her, perhaps with the intention of looking over her shoulder at the photograph which had called from her the remark he had overheard; but softly as he came her quick ear detected his step, and hastily closing the album she rose to meet him.

"At last!" she cried, with a playful, winning smile. "What has kept you so long, Charlie?"

"Whose portrait were you looking at?" he asked, sternly, putting aside the delicate little hand that sought his.

"Oh, I don't know; nobody's in particular," she replied, carelessly.

"Florence," said he, and his voice was sterner and colder even than it was wont to be, "Florence, I insist on knowing whose portrait you were looking at when I entered the room."

She gazed into his face, half frightened at the tone in which he spoke.

"At Gerald Talbot's, I think. There, Charlie, now go and dress for dinner; it is an hour late. Make haste, dear; you can't think how lonely I have been without you—and on Christmas Eve, too. Don't be long, Charlie."

Without another word he left the room, without a look or glance at the graceful figure of his wife.

Florence stood exactly as she left her as if petrified. There was a cold chill at her heart; there was an anticipation of coming evil, vague and undefined. He had not kissed her, nor even greeted her; his voice and manner had been hard and cruel in the extreme.

In vain she tried to excuse him to herself. She felt, oh! so sadly, the absence of all the husband's love and sympathy for which her heart yearned.

Then came upon her just one feeble ray of hope, of hope that his manner was only caused by some worry or disappointment in that "horrid City," that Consuls had gone "up" or "down," or that mule twist wasn't "firm," or that gray shirtings were "dull," or that some of the thousand and one cares of mercantile life had worried him, perhaps lost him money. That must be it, she thought, no worse than that, and she resolved to hide her own sorrow and disappointment and to be as lively, as merry, and as happy outwardly as was possible, in order that she might distract her husband's gloom.

She carried out her programme to the very best of her power, but it had no effect in removing the cloud from Charles Harcourt's brow.

Again and again she longed to throw her arms round him and implore him to confide in her and tell her what disquieted him, but the dinners at Cardross, even when the master and mistress dined alone, were stately affairs. There was a footman behind each of their chairs, and there was a terribly pompous butler before a sideboard groaning with plate, so that as long as the meal lasted any interchange of confidence between husband and wife was impossible.

In vain Florence strove to make him talk on any of the little trivial events of the day. He answered her only by monosyllables, and in the end she gave up the task in despair, and finished her dinner in silence.

She noticed that Charles, usually most abstemious, drank much more than was his custom, but scarcely

touched the meat upon his plate, and as the long, long, weary meal dragged slowly towards completion, her heart sank lower and lower within her, in the dread anticipation of some great sorrow, she knew not what, that seemed to be hovering over her.

At last the dinner which had seemed so interminable was completed; the wine and fruits were placed upon the table, and the butler and footmen withdrew.

Charles Harcourt, his head bent down, did not break silence, and Florence was checked when she would have spoken by the angry frown upon her husband's face, so they sat facing each other without speaking for some time.

Florence was the first to speak.

"Have you had bad news to-day?" she asked, in a timid voice.

"Yes, very bad news."

Again there was a long pause, which again Florence broke.

"Have you seen Gerald to-day?" she asked.

"Who?" asked her husband, in a tone so savage as to drive the colour from her cheek; but yet she answered, in her soft, sweet voice:

"Gerald—Gerald Talbot."

"Gerald Talbot is a thief!" replied Harcourt, fiercely.

"A thief!" stammered Florence, and her hands trembled and her voice shook. "What do you mean, Charlie?"

"Precisely what I say. The man you forced me to take into my service has robbed me. Do I speak plainly? He stole my money, and I have discharged him."

"Discharged! You believe Gerald to be a thief, and you have discharged him! Oh, Charles, you have done very, very wrong."

Looking into her husband's face, she saw how much blacker were his looks, how much more ferocious his eyes; but she little guessed the cause.

"Yes," he answered, angrily, "I have done wrong not to hand him over to the police, not to prosecute him and have him transported. The fellow robbed me."

"Gerald is no thief," said Mrs. Harcourt, rising from her chair, her bright eyes flashing with indignation, and her whole frame quivering with excitement.

"I tell you he is," Charles Harcourt retorted, angrily.

"Oh, Charles, forgive me! Appearances may be against him. I do not doubt it seems to you as you say, but if you only knew Gerald as I know him, if you only trusted him as I trust him, you would be sure that he was totally incapable of a dishonest or a dishonest action."

"I did trust him, and he has robbed me."

"No, Charles, no. Gerald is not thief; on that I would stake my life. Some one has poisoned your mind against him. Gerald is as true and noble a man as ever entered the world. Believe me, Charles, you are deceived."

"I am not deceived!" Harcourt made answer, in a voice of thunder, and he directed his gaze full upon his wife.

She quailed before his angry looks and turned aside.

"No," he repeated; "I am not deceived. I have learnt one-half the truth and I can guess the other."

"What do you mean?"

"Why do you defend him?" he asked, replying to her question by another.

"Why? Because I know him to be guiltless of this monstrous charge; because I know him to be the very soul of honesty; because for years I have known his thoughts and actions; because I can answer for him as I could for myself; and because—"

Here she faltered and stopped, she lowered her eyes to the ground, which the moment before had been flashing proud defiance, and did not complete her sentence.

"Because of what?" asked her husband, in cruel, hard, measured accents. "Finish what you would say."

"I can say no more."

"Then I will finish your speech for you. Because you love him! That is what you should have said."

"Love him! Yes, as a brother; but—"

"Pshaw! As a brother! Was there ever a more hollow mockery than those words? As a brother! What young woman ever loved a young man unrelated to her as a brother? Do you take me for a child? Do you suppose that I believe in those mawkish affections of which your poets rave and your novelists write? No, madam; a thousand times no! Your own lips have confirmed my but too well-founded suspicions. You love the thief Talbot, and your husband is dishonoured—disgraced!"

"No, no, Charles! What do you mean? What are you saying? Are you dreaming? Are you mad? Of what do you suspect me?"

"Come, madam, your fine tragedy airs have no

effect upon me. I understand all now. I comprehend your desire to have your lover installed in a position of trust in my office; I fully understand why—"

"Silence, Mr. Harcourt! How dare you speak to me in that manner?"

Her attitude was noble, her tones were majestic and impressive, and for a moment Charles Harcourt wavered in his belief of his wife's unfaithfulness, but the next instant proofs slight in themselves individually came flooding into his brain, and he banished the tenderness which for the twinkling of an eye had gained the ascendancy in his bosom.

"It is too late to attempt to conceal it from me," he said. "I know everything now. I was a fool not to have perceived it sooner with the proofs before my eyes."

"What proofs?" she asked.

Her voice was now as cold and hard as his, her manner as self-possessed. Any love between husband and wife was, for the time at all events, dead. Now they were only accuser and accused.

"Proofs!" he repeated, with a hollow laugh. "I have more than enough to satisfy me. I have heard and seen enough to convince the most sceptical. Ask your own heart, ask your own conscience for the proofs!"

"Then—then, Charles, you believe I am—unfaithful to you?"

She commanded these words bravely enough, but her voice broke down into a sob as she completed the sentence. Surely, there must have been a demon in his heart that made him answer as he did.

"Yes. Painful and bitter as is the humiliation, that is my belief. How else can I account for all I know? By what right did he call you by your Christian name? By what right had he your portrait and your glove concealed in his desk? By what right did you murmur those words of affection over his photograph I overheard as I entered the drawing-room just now? and for what reason do you defend the man who has robbed your husband? Answer me! You cannot. The reply is simple though: You love him!"

"Oh, Charles, if I only could explain—if it were my secret—I—"

"Enough. I wish to hear nothing. Any excuse you may invent will be of no avail. The evidence against you is overwhelming. Go. You are no longer my wife."

For a minute she stood before him as if petrified.

"You—you believe this—you mean this?" she said, in a voice which, though low, was firm.

"Yes."

"Heaven forgive you!" she murmured.

Then there was a long silence, during which Charles Harcourt lowered his eyes from the ground.

"I am no longer your wife," she said, at length, in a strange, dreamy way, as if she were scarcely conscious of the meaning of the words she uttered.

"You are no longer my wife," he answered, still without looking at her.

Slowly and sadly she took from her beautiful neck the diamond necklace which adorned it, slowly she unclasped the jewelled bracelets from her fair arms, slowly she removed the sparkling gems from her taper fingers, keeping only the plain gold band, the testimony of marriage, and laid them all before him on the table. Still he neither moved nor raised his eyes.

"You have suspected me," she said, "falsely, as Heaven knows! You have told me I am no longer your wife. You will repeat when you discover your error, but know, Charles Harcourt, I have a spirit and a pride as strong as your own. I will be your wife no longer. I will leave you. You have told me to go—and I go."

She turned from him with stately majesty to leave the room, but at the door something of womanly feeling, something of womanly love impelled her to return.

"Charles, Charles!" she cried, in a passionate outburst, "will you not say good-bye to me?"

He turned his head away from her and answered never a word.

Then she left the room, and it was not till she had closed the door behind her that the deep heart-rending sobs she had kept down within her bosom during the interview found utterance.

Like a statue Charles Harcourt remained motionless in his seat, his hands thrust deep into his trouser pockets, his legs stretched out towards the fire, and his head, with gloomy face and contracted brows, bent low upon his breast.

For more than an hour he remained in this attitude, almost without motion. Then the clanging of the street door closed violently aroused him. He started to his feet, and hurrying to the window drew aside the heavy curtains which hung before it and gazed out into the darkness. As he did so a cab

rolled away from the front entrance, and was soon lost to sight in the gloom of the winter night.

With a sad sigh, and a weary look upon his face, he came back to his chair and resumed his former attitude. How long he remained buried with his own miserable thoughts and wretched reflections he never knew, but while he sat thus in moody meditation the bells of a neighbouring church broke forth into a merry peal, for Christmas Day had dawned, and they were proclaiming to the world the glad tidings of peace on earth and goodwill towards men.

CHAPTER V.

He gave no warning there; but struck

With a fierce and cruel blow,

Like the barb that sinks from hand unseen

In the heart of the bounding roe. *Eliza Cook.*

"PEACE on earth and goodwill towards men."

What a mockery those words seemed to Charles Harcourt, yet the merrily pealing bells would chime them in his ears.

Full of evil thoughts and hatred, he listened to them, and cursed them in his heart for their jingling. What had he to do with peace or goodwill? What concern had he in the glad tidings they rang forth to the world?

It seemed to him that from that day he must be alone, that he must pass through a miserable, solitary life, pointed at scornfully by his neighbours, laughed at by some, mocked by others. At present it was not his heart that was touched—only his pride.

His pride and his self-esteem were most grievously wounded. The belief in his wife's faithlessness hurt his vanity, and that was the uppermost thought in his mind. She had dared to sin against his mightiness, she had humbled him by her conduct, she had reduced him to a position in which a beggar in the street might pity him; and for this he could never forgive her. In his anger against her even Gerald Talbot was forgotten for the time, but when presently he came to think of his discharged clerk it was with feelings of the bitterest rage, and he brought down his clenched fist upon the table with a force that made the plates and glasses rattle again; and all this while the church bells rang out sweetly peace on earth and goodwill towards men!

Peace! There was no peace for Charles Harcourt; his breast was a boiling, seething cauldron of evil passions.

Goodwill! There was no goodwill in his heart, he hated the whole world at that moment with a bitter and intense hatred.

Presently he caught sight of the sparkling jewels which Florence had left before him on the table, and with a sweep of his arm he scattered them on the floor, for he could not bear to look upon things that so vividly recalled her presence. He cursed her as he did so with a mad vehemence, he cursed himself and the whole world, and still the bells, jangling and discordant enough in his ears, continued to peal forth the same good tidings of great joy; but they found no echo in his heart.

Still, somehow, as he sat brooding over his supposed wrongs, angry with everybody, himself included, his thoughts wandered—would wander against his will—away from that mansion of Cardross, with its velvet and silk, its gold and its mirrors, away too from that office in St. Stylians' Yard, with all its money-making apparatus, to a far-away country home, where as a boy standing at his mother's knee he had first listened to the sound of the merry Christmas bells, and had first learnt the meaning of their chimes; and as his thoughts wandered thus, a softer, gentler, kindlier feeling suffused his heart.

It was no great stretch of thought to pass from this country home, once so familiar, and dear as it was familiar, to another in which he had passed his last Christmas Day. Only a year ago! Only twelve short months since! But what a change in his whole life! He was not married then, but was with her who was to be his wife. Together, arm in arm, they had walked across the fields to the village church, the bells ringing cheerily as they did now that joyful message of "peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." But with what different feelings had he then listened to their sound, yet it was but a year ago!

The magic of thought and the music of the bells wrought a wonderful change in Charles Harcourt, as he sat listening and thinking, and his feelings became softer towards the wife he had turned from his door that night.

Something like sorrow, something like compassion for her touched his heart; not that he repented of what he had done, his pride would not permit him to do that, but he grieved for her, and wondered within himself if, supposing she came to his feet tearful and repentant, he could not receive her again into his house.

Still the bells chimed on and on, but no longer to him discordantly, until at last, overcome by memories

of the past and despair of the future, the stern, cold, hard man leaned forward till his forehead touched the table, and sobbed those tearless, convulsive sobs that only come from a strong man in his agony.

After a while he sprang from his seat and rang violently at the bell, and continued ringing till the butler, yawning and rubbing his eyes, appeared at the door.

"Tell Humphrey to saddle the mare for me instantly!" he cried; "and bid Mrs. Harcourt's maid come to me."

The butler stared.

"It's very late, sir," he answered; "Humphrey's been abed and asleep this hour and more, and as for mistress's maid, she's abed and asleep too."

"What's it matter where they are?" cried Harcourt, impatiently. "Do as I bid you! Am I master here or not? Do as you're told!"

The butler slunk away to do his master's bidding, grumbling not a little, you may be sure; and Staunton—Mrs. Harcourt's maid—grumbled, and so did Humphrey; but the master of Cardross had a way of being obeyed, and his servants knew it.

Staunton, not a little wondering, and very cross at being disturbed from her slumber, huddled on a few garments, and presented herself in the dining-room before her master.

"Where's Mrs. Harcourt?" he asked, without preface or introduction.

"I'm sure I can't say, sir. She went off, and told me she wouldn't be back for ever so long to come, and I was a-wondering—"

"Never mind your wonderings. Answer my question—where did Mrs. Harcourt say she was going?"

"Well, sir, she didn't rightly say where she was a-going, nor why; and me and Rebecca was a-wondering—"

"Confound your wonderings, woman; tell me what I want to know!"

"I can't, sir; leastways, I think she did mention some place—down in Kent, sir, I think she said it were; and I was a-wondering—"

"The name, the name—tell me where it was this moment; or I'll shake it out of you!"

Harcourt looked so ferocious, and so capable of executing his threat, that the frightened girl stammered out the information at once.

"Riversham, sir, it was Riversham, but she told me to be sure not to tell a soul; and says I, I wonder—"

"Wonder in bed!" answered Harcourt, "you've told me all I want to know."

Miss Staunton withdrew, with a haughty toss of her head.

"Well, I'm sure," she said, afterwards, in describing the interview to a fellow-servant, "to be awed at, and called a woman, and told to wonder in bed. Lor! the wages ain't worth it; and, what's more, I won't stand it!"

"Riversham," muttered Charles Harcourt to himself as the girl left the room; "what could have induced her to go there? Five-and-thirty miles! Never mind; if I ride through the night, I shall be there at daybreak!"

Then impatiently he walked up and down the long dining-room, waiting for Humphrey to announce that the mare was saddled.

While he was thus waiting there came a gentle rattling at the front door. Harcourt, perhaps half-hoping it might be Florence come back, answered it himself, and found himself face to face with Duncombe.

"I happened to be passing, Mr. Harcourt—don't be offended, sir—and I saw a light burning still, and having something rather important to communicate, sir, I made bold to knock. I hope I don't intrude, but I—that is, you see—"

"What is it?" asked the City merchant, brusquely, for he was in no humour to listen to any tale of commercial matters at that moment.

"Well, Mr. Harcourt, after what passed to-day—after you let off that Talbot so easily, I thought—that is, I—"

"Come to the point, Duncombe, please."

"Well, sir, I thought you might like to know about him, so I found out—that is, I discovered where he was going, in case you might wish to take any steps to recover a portion of the stolen money, Mr. Harcourt."

"No, no!" the other answered, impatiently, for the mere mention of Talbot's name was unbearable. "I shall take no farther steps in the matter—none whatever!"

"Very good, sir—very good—of course not—it is like your noble philanthropy; still, if you know any one at Riversham it might be as well to—"

"Where? What place did you say?" cried Harcourt, roused into instant animation.

"Riversham, in Kent; about five-and-thirty miles from here; a very pretty place, I'm told, and—"

"Heavens!" cried Harcourt, in fury, "then she has gone to meet him!"

"The mare's saddled, and at the door, sir," said Humphrey, putting his head into the room at this juncture.

"Take her back. I sha'n't want her to-night—stay, though—I may. Wait!—do you hear?—wait!" Humphrey withdrew, grumbling.

"I see it all now! Oh, cursed fool that I have been! and it was upon this woman I have expended love and sympathy!" So Harcourt soliloquised, not heeding that Duncombe was drinking in his words with greedy ears. "Not content with what she has already done, she must leave my roof, if not actually with this villain, at all events with the intention of joining him within a few hours. That fellow, Talbot—thief and rascal! could I but lay hands on him I would dash the brains from out his head—ay, I would kill him like a dog. Yes, yes, it must be so. Why else did she tell that woman to reveal to no one whether she had gone? Ten thousand curses on the villain! Could I but lay hands upon him—could I but feel his throat between my fingers—"

"Beg pardon, Mr. Harcourt—"

"Eh? What?" he replied, for the first time conscious that he was not alone.

"Do you refer to Gerald Talbot?"

"Yes—that thief, Talbot!"

"I thought you said you forgave him the robbery?"

"He has robbed me of more than you think for, Duncombe; robbed me of that which nothing but his life can repay. Do you hear that? Do you think I am mad? I am not. If I could but find him, if I could but lay my hands upon him, I would ask no more."

"That would not be difficult. He started not two hours ago from London to walk to Riversham. On horseback you could easily overtake him."

Charles Harcourt laughed a loud, discordant laugh.

"I will, Duncombe; I will. Thanks for the information. Ah, thief Talbot, woe betide you when we meet!"

Without another word he left the room, and, putting on his coat and hat as he passed through the hall, mounted the black mare which Humphrey held ready for him at the door, and dashed off at a mad pace into the black darkness of the night.

To describe the tumultuous rag-distorted thoughts that filled his mind is impossible. All softness, all pity, all mercy were forgotten now in this last conclusive proof of his wife's sin, and he spurred his horse forward towards Riversham, urging her to her utmost speed.

Duncombe, on the doorstep of Cardross, listened to the clatter of the horse's hoofs upon the hard, frosty road, until, growing fainter and fainter, the sound died away in the distance, then he walked across the garden and let himself out at the front gate.

While these scenes were being enacted in Cardross, Gerald Talbot was walking along the dreary road on his way to Riversham.

He was but a few miles from London, when the bells of some distant church sounded clear and distinct in the still, frosty air, ringing in the Christmas morn.

"A merry Christmas!" The words came naturally to his thoughts with the sound of the chimes. A merry Christmas! What a mockery the syllables seemed to him as he trudged along the highway, miserable and sick at heart!

"Ah!" he muttered. "There is nothing merry in Christmas for me! Merry! A man has cut his throat on less provocation than I have, and I'm not sure it wouldn't be the best thing I could do. No, no! It is not so bad as that; besides, it is not myself alone for whom I have to think. I must live and fight the world for her sake."

Then he trudged bravely on his weary way with renewed energy and spirit.

About eight o'clock on Christmas morning two working men, crossing over Dumbledeare Common, about two miles from Riversham in Kent, saw lying on the edge of a gravel-pit only a few yards from the road what appeared to them to be the body of a man.

They approached nearer, thinking at first that it was one of their companions who had been celebrating Christmas Eve with more than a sufficient of ale, but found to their horror it was the senseless, apparently lifeless body of a gentleman, well dressed, as far as the material of his clothes could be ascertained, but they were so covered with blood and so stained by the soil as to make them difficult to examine.

The unfortunate man had been subjected to the cruelest treatment, his head being battered and bruised, apparently by some heavy blunt instrument, such as a life-preserver or the butt end of a riding-whip.

Robbery was apparently the object of the assault,

as the pockets of his dress had all been rifled, but the thieves by some chance had omitted to take from him a valuable gold watch he carried in his waistcoat.

The two labourers at once summoned assistance, the brutally battered body of the young man was placed upon a gate unlatched for the purpose, and carried without delay to a roadside public-house known as the "Jolly Magpie," situated about half-way between the spot where the body was found and the village of Riversham.

The landlord expressed it as his opinion that it would be no good to send for a doctor, but nevertheless immediately despatched a messenger for one, then proceeded to search in the pockets of the blood-stained coat for some clue to the identity of the unfortunate youth, and succeeded in finding an envelope addressed to "Gerald Talbot, Esquire, care of Charles Harcourt, Esquire, St. Stylites' Yard, City."

Upon making this discovery the landlord of the "Jolly Magpie," sat down and wrote a letter to Mr. Charles Harcourt, informing him of the facts connected with the discovery of the body and of his supposition that it was that of the person to whom the envelope was addressed—Gerald Talbot—and asking him whether he knew anything of the young man, and if in any way he could help to discover any clue to the possible murderer.

(To be continued.)

PROVISIONS FOR PARIS.—A suggestion has been made that the vast accumulation of Australian meat, for which there seems to be no adequate market here, should be sent to Paris to meet the requirements of the 2,000,000 of starving people who will require feeding at the end of the siege. It is thought French skill in cookery will make the meat palatable enough for hungry people, though our own ill-fed poor do not seem to appreciate its merits.

GERMAN LOSSES DURING THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN.—Up to four weeks ago the total of the North German and Baden losses in the war was as follows:—1. Officers—dead, 802; wounded, 2,426; missing, 24. Total, 3,252. 2. Soldiers—dead, 10,499; wounded, 50,249; missing (which category includes the dead not found), 7,872. Total, 68,620. Grand total of all losses, 71,872. To this figure must be added the Bavarian losses, officially reported up to the battle of Orleans, with 901 dead and 4,614 wounded. The Württemberg losses remain to be accounted for, as also those by sickness in the whole army. With regard to the latter the present war has been no exception to the old rule of disease being a more deadly enemy than powder and shot.

THE EMPRESS EUGENIE.—Among the things which the Empress most deeply regrets having left behind her, in the hurry of her departure from Paris, was a photographic album which she had received from Queen Victoria, and which contained the royal donor's autograph and a selection of interesting portraits. Hearing of the loss, the Queen immediately gave orders for the preparation of another album, which will take the place at Chislehurst of that which has been lost; the inscription and the *cartes de visite* being as nearly as possible the same as those which imparted so much value to the gift left at the Tuilleries.—The Royal Artillery from Woolwich, when out for a march, having halted on Chislehurst Common, were inspected by the ex-Empress of the French and the Prince Imperial, after an introduction to Sir David Wood, who was in command, by an officer with whom the Empress was acquainted. Her Majesty looked in good health, and walked from battery to battery along the line of troops, carrying in her hand the walking-cane without which she seldom goes abroad.

GOEILLAS OR WILD MEN.—It has been rumoured for some time in California that in the mountains at Orestimba Creek are to be seen occasionally either gorillas, or wild men so devoid of personal attractions that they may fairly be classed as gorillas. A recent explorer, writing on the 16th Oct., gives a description of one of these animals or persons, as the case may be:—"It was in the image of a man, but could not have been human. The creature, whatever it was, stood full five feet high, and was disproportionately broad and square at the shoulders, with arms of great length. The legs were very short and the body long. The head was small, and appeared to be set on the shoulders without any neck. The whole body was covered with dark brown and cinnamon-coloured hair, that on the head standing in a shock and growing close down to the eyes like a Digger Indian's. As I looked he threw his head back and whistled, then stooped and grasped a stick from the fire, this he swung round and round until the fire on the end had gone out, when he repeated the manoeuvre. Fifteen minutes I watched him as he whistled and scattered my fire about. I could easily have put a bullet through his head, but why should I kill him? Having amused himself apparently all he desired with my fire he started to go, but having gone a short distance he returned, and was joined by another—a female un-

mistakably—when they both turned, walked past me, within twenty yards of where I sat, and disappeared in the bush."

SCIENCE.

RAIN.—In a lecture at Norwich recently, Mr. James Glaisher, F.R.S., said:—The whole of the rain had its origin and fell 800ft. from the earth. Desiring to discover the influence of the moon on the elements, he took observations, and discovered, after a long series of observations, that on the ninth day of the moon there was much the most rain, and that on the first and last week of the moon there was the least amount. He had taken account from 1815 to 1869 of every day on which there had been an inch of rainfall, and he had found that on July 26th, 1867, the rainfall amounted to 3 in. 7-10ths—the largest amount that had fallen in one day at the Royal Observatory. From careful observations he had made, he had no doubt that the moon did exercise an influence upon rain. Another investigation that he made was as to the time of day that rain fell most, and he had found that the largest quantity of rain fell at about four o'clock in the afternoon.

PROFESSOR GUTHRIE ON HEAT.—Professor Guthrie is one of the lecturers upon scientific subjects at the Kensington Museum which are treated of as part of the course of scientific instruction for women, which the ladies of the present day have so much cause to congratulate themselves upon. At the beginning of the lectures the professor spoke of the capacity of heat in different substances, and he has now proceeded to demonstrate, by means of some highly interesting experiments, the different capacities of melting in different substances. In illustration of the manner in which the specific heat of metals is ascertained, the professor performed at his last lecture some experiments with iron and water, putting into a pound of ice-cold water a pound of iron at a temperature of 100 degrees. In examining the temperature the two acquire, after being in contact for some time, it proves to be about 11 degrees, so that the iron has sunk in temperature 89 degrees, thus losing a greater amount of heat than the water has gained. Water being the standard of comparison, you find the specific heat of iron by dividing 89 degrees by 11 degrees, the result being about 8 degrees. The loss of a certain quantity of heat by the iron affects the temperature of the iron more than the gain of the same quantity of heat by the water affects its temperature; accordingly, the capacity of iron for heat is less than that of water, or the specific heat of iron is less than 1. Similar experiments with olive oil proved its specific heat to be little more than half that of water. Further explanations on the important subject of evaporation were reserved for the next lecture.

HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH THE SUN.

IT is our purpose to show by what means any photographer may take for himself photographs of the sun, not only during an eclipse, but whenever he feels the inclination so to do. As it is our desire that the principle on which enlarged photographs of the sun can be produced may be thoroughly understood, we have to request our readers' attention to the following experiments:

Take a whole-plate portrait combination that gives a very sharply-defined image in the centre of the plate when no stop is used; its ability to produce a flat field is of no consequence here, all that is required being sharpness in the centre. Remove the lens from the camera, and take it into a room in which there is a lighted candle or gas. This educational experiment ought to be made in the evening after dark. Having the light placed at one end of the room, stop to the opposite end, and, having previously pinned up a white sheet of paper, focus on it (holding the lens in the right hand) an image of the candle. It will be very small, sharp, and brilliant; and the distance between the lens and the sheet of paper will be eight or ten inches, according to its focus.

Next obtain another portrait combination of short focus—a small-quarter plate or stereoscopic combination answers well—and, holding it in the left hand with the anterior lens towards the paper on the wall, repeat its previous experiment in the following manner:—Focus the light with the large lens only, holding it with its front end towards the light; then, keeping it still pointed to the light, withdraw it from the paper to a distance of about a yard. Of course the image has now quite disappeared. Then introduce a small combination in the line of light, and at a distance from the large lens of six or eight inches in addition to the focus of the latter, and a non-inverted image of the flame of large size will be seen upon the paper. By adjusting the lens the image will be very sharp and brilliant.

What we have thus described is nothing more nor less than a method of obtaining a large and non-inverted image of an object by one direct operation.

To carry this idea into practice is by no means difficult. It is only necessary to have a long, small deal box, in the front of which is fixed the large lens, the small objective being attached to the back. As the racks of both lenses will be outside, there will be every facility for focussing. It will prove more convenient if the end to which the smaller lens is screwed be made so as to travel in the square wooden tube.

In photographing the sun the exposure must be extremely rapid. It is best to have a shutter, with a horizontal slit in it, placed in front of the sensitive plate, and so constructed that when a catch is released the shutter is pulled rapidly down by means of an india-rubber spring. The nearer this shutter is to the sensitive plate the better.

THE GULF STREAM.

THERE is no longer any shadow of doubt as to the existence of a movement of warm water, be it called a drift or a stream, from the tropics obliquely across the Atlantic Ocean towards the Arctic regions. What end and purpose, then, does it serve, and what influence has it upon the condition of the globe? This question is ably answered by Mr. Croll, who, in the opening of a series of papers on "Ocean Currents," has been the first to attempt a solution of the problems of the absolute amount of heat or cold conveyed by means of these agents, and the effect of this transference upon climate. His investigations have led to very wonderful results.

Selecting the Gulf Stream as the best known, he shows by an apparently reliable chain of evidence that this current alone carries as much heat from the tropics as is received by the globe within sixty-three miles on each side of the equator—an amount which probably equals the entire quantity of heat received by the whole Arctic regions from the rays of the sun. Mr. Croll estimates that the stoppage of the Gulf Stream would deprive the Atlantic Ocean of quantity of warmth equal to one-fourth of all the heat received from the sun by that area; that if all currents ceased to flow, and each place were dependent upon the rays of the sun alone for its heat, the equator would be 55 deg. warmer than at present, the poles 88 deg. colder.

The mean temperature of the latitude of London would be only 10 deg. This city then, its present actual mean temperature being 50 deg., is benefited to the extent of 40 deg. of heat by the Gulf Stream. Basing upon Mr. Croll's estimate of the temperature (10 deg.) of the latitude of London if deprived of the warmth of the Gulf Stream, this seeming paradox must be true that an ice-bearing current may raise the temperature of a region. Labrador has really a warm friend in the icy current which clings to its shores, for though the mean annual temperature of that country is but 32 deg., still, according to Mr. Croll's showing, this would be reduced by no less than 22 deg. were the polar stream to fail.

Though considerable uncertainty necessarily exists regarding the data used, yet the general results arrived at of the enormous influence of ocean currents on the climatic conditions of the globe in distributing the heat received from the sun cannot be materially affected, and almost warrant the conclusion come to by Mr. Croll that without ocean currents the earth would not be habitable.

These discoveries appear to Mr. Croll to throw a new light on the mystery of geological climate. Were the warm currents from the equator northward to be turned off, the northern hemisphere would speedily pass into a state of general glaciation. Such a deflection of the currents, it is believed, might take place by a change in the eccentricity of the earth's orbit. A high condition of eccentricity would tend to produce an accumulation of snow and ice in the hemisphere whose winters occur in aphelion, whilst exactly the opposite effect would take place in the other hemisphere which has its winter in perihelion. Then, since the trade winds owe their existence mainly to the difference of temperature which exists between the polar and the equatorial regions, it follows that the trade winds of this colder hemisphere would greatly exceed those of the warmer in strength, and would impel the warmer waters of the tropics entirely over into the opposite hemisphere, in the same manner as the south-east trades winds of the present state of the globe, from the southern (colder) hemisphere, now overcome in the north-eastern, and aid in transferring a larger share of the equatorial waters to the warm currents of the northern hemisphere. A similar condition of things to that which prevailed during the glacial epoch would then exist in the one-half of the earth, whilst a climate equal to that which geologists know to have prevailed in this hemisphere during a part of the Miocene period, when North Greenland enjoyed a climate as mild as that of England at the present day, would reign in the opposite hemisphere.

P. F.



[WAITING FOR DEATH.]

THE LOST HEIRESS OF LATYMER.

CHAPTER V.

On fair ground I could beat forty of them.

ONCE more the coverings were placed over the lanterns while the door was opened, and the two men bade adieu to the cave. The visit had been a welcome one to the rough men within, for they had long served on this perilous duty, and without receiving the large rewards that had been promised them.

Parry knew this fact well, and hence had given them to understand that he had been empowered to make contracts with them, and to disburse the moneys of the party. His well-known liberality made them eager to join him in any plot, no matter on what side, in the great struggle ; for the spy had spent the large fortune which his wife brought him in keeping up the belief that he was a moneyed agent of both parties. His ability was sufficient to make the queen believe that he mingled with the Catholics for the sole purpose of acting as her spy, while he managed to convince even Cardinal Como that his connection with Elizabeth's court was kept up for the purpose of getting information which would be useful to them.

Two or three times he had given warning of new laws about to be promulgated, thus giving a few rich Catholic gentlemen an opportunity for transferring their fortunes to France. Of course this was done for a large private reward ; but he gained by it the reputation of zeal in Mary's cause.

They had reached their former resting-place half-way down the cliff, where Parry halted and turned to his companion.

" You were true to your promise, Nick Kelloway, and I shall keep mine. Manage to the end as you did with those foolish fellows up there, and I will put more gold in your pocket than you have had there for many a year."

" But how can I aid you, Parry ? It would not be safe for me to venture in London."

" I will get your pardon from the queen. Stay on board the ' Marquise,' as Captain Redmond, until I send for you, and if you go back I'll give you a letter to make things right. We have to take service under Queen Boss for a time ; but I can easily make them think it is for the purpose of acting as a spy."

" Will they believe you ?"

" Yes—I've promised to give them the money that I shall receive for betraying this plot."

" What plot ?"

" Have I not mentioned it ? No matter ; it is a

plot to get some ten thousand pounds—that is all. The cardinal's letter, which you saw I did not read above, will be proof of my statement."

" And those letters, Parry—"

" Ah ! yes ; one is to Arundel, the other to Sir Christopher Hatton, concerning the maiden, I presume ; and fortunately it fell into my hands."

It was the custom of many persons living in France to send private letters to their friends in England in these clandestine packets—not that there was anything treasonable in them, but to keep them from being read by the authorities, who were not over scrupulous in keeping secret the private matters which were disclosed to them when in discharge of their official duties.

The letter to Arundel, Parry had recognised as being in the handwriting of the banker who had advanced him the money on the earl's endorsement. By withholding this it might be six months before any further communication could take place.

As for the letter to Sir Christopher, it probably contained information concerning the maiden which would prove of value.

" As for the earl, Kelloway," pursued the spy, " I shall leave him in your hands. You were called the best fencer in England, when, as Nicholas Bravo, you lived in town, and should the earl force a fight upon you—and should he fall—that moment will I place the queen's pardon in your hand, and give you two thousand of the five thousand pounds that I owe the earl. Do you understand ?"

" Yes ; but suppose the queen refuse my pardon—"

" Then you remain here. I will not send for you unless I have the pardon secured."

The captain pondered the subject for a moment—not that he had any scruples about the plot, but could he trust Parry ? A little reflection told him that the spy was too much involved to play him a trick, and he assented to the plan.

" But the maiden," said he, presently, " what of her ?"

" She will be useful to me in many ways. The story is too long to tell now, Kelloway, even if it would interest you, but you shall know it some time," said Parry, with an affectation of candour.

Few men of his time were shrewder judges of human nature than Doctor Parry, and a long life at court, as well as years spent with the most desperate characters, had taught him how to manage his fellows, and to mould them to his purposes. With men of this class—low-born men, who have learned the ways of gentlemen by association and experience, like Captain Redmond, nothing wins them so surely as an appearance of confidence in secret matters.

Parry's shrewdness consisted mainly in the readiness with which he gave such seeming confidence, when in reality he told nothing of any importance—noting, probably, which would not have been known in a short time.

" You shall have the story soon," Parry had remarked, and Redmond was satisfied in the belief that he was to be the one trusty confidant of the influential spy. " When we have a spare hour I can give you the whole of it ; meantime, I am paying my addresses to the aunt, Dame Rachel, though it would not be strange if I should win the maiden instead. Come."

" Yes, let us hasten ; it must be after two already."

The master started on, and, closely followed by Parry, continued their way ; but ere they had come to the rocks the captain stopped so suddenly that both he and Parry were brought to their backs.

" What the fiend—"

" Hark, Parry ! not a breath ! The guards ! " whispered Redmond, still lying upon his back.

The grating of a heel upon the sands was clearly heard, although the night was too dark to see where the guard-boat had landed ; but in a moment a shout was raised, and half-a-dozen coast-guards ran along the beach.

" If they get the boat we are lost," whispered the captain ; but the rapid talk of the guards then, with the hasty run for their own boat, told the master that his two sailors had not been caught asleep.

" Say nothing, but follow me closely," said Redmond, presently ; " are you armed ? "

" A dagger only."

" My sword is good for two or three if it come to that—hast ? "

They heard the sounds of departure as the guards tumbled into their boat and made preparations to pursue the smaller boat that had escaped them. Slowly and noiselessly cruising along the coast, the guards had seen the two sailors before they were themselves observed, and tried to land in silence so that a simultaneous rush could be made.

But the two seamen were not to be caught in this manner. The guards had not run their boat on shore before they were seen, and, comprehending their tactics at a glance, the sailors waited until all of them had landed and had pulled their heavy boat out of the surf. With a shout, the party rushed towards their prey ; but at that instant two vigorous strokes sent the little wherry several yards from the shore.

Baffled thus, the guards rushed back to their boat, and, leaving three of their number on the beach, went out in pursuit.

It was an anxious moment to the two men on the rocks, for just below them paced the guards who had been left. Standing against the side of the cliff. Captain Redmond peered over the tops of the bushes, and at that moment saw two quick flashes of light far to the left, with an answer from the "Marquise."

"It is the signal," said Redmond, drawing his sword.

"What signal?"

"The signal agreed on for such attacks. By this time the 'Marquise' is under sail; but she will come in again below when she has eluded the guard."

"And the boat—?"

"It is safe, Parry; it will be at the second station before we can reach there. They will double on these fellows in the dark. Are you good for a two-mile run?"

"If I run for life I shall do my best. Oh, that I had a sword!"

"I'll put one of the fellows out of the way at first; we must trust to luck."

Although Captain Redmond said that they must trust to luck, he himself felt that his sole trust was in his good blade. Nor was he at all dismayed at the prospect of an encounter with three well-armed men; but his form straightened as he drew his sword-belt a trifle closer and arranged his cloak so that his arms would be free.

Intently they listened for the boat, but could now only hear the dipping of the oars faintly as the sound was borne to their ears on the gentle night breeze. Fortunately the night was intensely dark, the light of the stars being obscured by heavy black clouds.

Yet over the tree-tops they could see the white sands, and now and then the dim forms of the guards as they paced about the spot.

"Let us go back for Captain Oscar, and capture these fellows," said Parry, in a whisper.

"That would draw attention to the cave. There are but three; I will lessen the odds in their favour after my first stroke—hast?"

"They have them," said a guard below; "yes—I think—"

"No; they are turning again. It's too dark a night—see, they turn this way. How is it, Bart?" he called in a louder tone to the third guard, who was some distance up the beach; "can you hear them?"

"Readily; they are searching still towards the light," came the reply.

"That has always deceived them," whispered Redmond, with an inward chuckle; "while they go on after the light our wherry goes after darkness in another direction."

"They are coming in again," called the farthermost guard to his comrades.

The two others were now leaning against the base of the very rocks upon which Parry and the captain were lying.

"The passage must be on the other side of the cliff," said one of the guards, looking up the declivity upon which the two men were lying; "there is no outlet here. A goat could not scale those rocks."

"No, indeed; I know the place of old. It is nearly upright for two miles down the coast."

"Then they haul up their smuggled arms by ropes. We shall lose them unless our fellows catch the boat. Bart!"

"Ay."

"Come up, Bart; they are returning."

"I can hear them. Foiled again! Curse the luck!" called the guard, in reply.

"Now is our time! Are you ready?" whispered the captain.

"Ready; lead on, and—"

A tremor in the voice made Redmond turn quickly; but he had no time to lose.

"As soon as we are free to run, go down the sands to the right. We must overpower them before the boat can be called in. There are but two here now."

Parry was not a brave man—far from it, in fact, but he saw that it was necessary to fight their way out, and there was no other means of escape. But he mentally vowed to let the captain do the most of the fighting, if a chance for avoiding a struggle were offered him.

Nor was the captain loth to take even more than his share, for such adventures were but pleasurable excitement to him, and his daring savoured more of brute foolhardiness than of the courage that belongs to thinking men.

With one glance to see that Parry was prepared, the captain gave a bound through the bushes, landing almost beside the astonished guards.

Before they could recover from their surprise one had fallen without a groan, and, shouting loudly to his comrade below, the second crossed swords in self-defence. Fiercely they fought; both battling for life itself. In the few seconds it took for the third guard to come up Redmond had already given a serious wound when the man drew near.

"Detain him a second, doctor," cried the captain, fighting like a demon; "here is a blade," and even in the heat of the conflict he kicked aside the sword that had fallen from the hand of the first guard who had fallen beneath his blow.

Still shouting for aid, the guard fought with desperation. A call from the rapidly approaching boat told them that the alarm had been heard. Redmond gave a deep and disabling cut on his antagonist's sword arm, barely in time to parry the blow aimed at him by the now-comer.

"Doctor, take charge of this wounded fellow a second," cried the captain; but there came no response, and he saw the man holding a dagger in his left hand, preparing to strike.

With a sudden spring Redmond leaped backwards, just as the guard was making a thrust in fierce. It proved a fortunate move for the captain. In trying to recover himself the guard tripped over the body of his comrade, measuring his length upon the sand.

Quick as a flash the captain swung his blade across the leg of the prostrate man, cutting the tendons completely, and instantly turned for the man with the dagger. But he was already in full flight along the beach.

"Now then, doctor—doctor!" he called, still louder but daring not to mention the name.

There was no answer to his call. Down the sands the escaped guard was shouting to the boat, and the oars rattled in the thwart as the men pulled their best for land.

Again and again he called for his friend, and hearing no sound in reply, pushed aside the bushes to see if he had fallen from the rock.

At that moment the wounded guard called to his comrades, and Redmond rushed back to his side.

"I'll lay your skull open if you utter another cry," said the captain, fiercely; and once more he pressed into the bushes in search of his friend. He was not there.

"He may be on the rock still," Redmond thought as he prepared to climb the steep.

But it was too late then, for he heard the boat's oars grating up the sands, and the splash of water as the men leaped out one after the other.

With the dead guard's sword in his left hand, Redmond ran along the sands with the speed of a deer, and he had barely passed from sight when he heard them talking with the wounded man at the spot he had just left.

For nearly half an hour he ran on at full speed, but at length paused to listen.

He could hear nothing but the usual sounds of the night, with the murmur of the sea as the low waves chased each other up the beach. For the first time he now observed that the tide was coming in rapidly.

As he paused, a wave broke at his very feet, and he looked up at the black cliff behind with the hope of finding a pass to the high ground above.

It was yet a long distance to the lower rendezvous.

There was little hope of his finding a way up the cliff by night—hence his only safety lay in a run across the shore.

"I will not be encumbered by this," he said aloud, looking at the guard's sword, which he still held; "I took it for Parry, but there's a small likelihood of his using a blade when he can take to his heels."

A dark object upon the water attracted his attention at this moment.

Quickly springing into the shadow of the cliff, he looked eagerly for a time, discovering at length that it was a boat.

Could there be such good luck in store for him as that should prove to be his own wherry?

The question was not satisfactorily settled ere he heard the tramp of his pursuers, and determined to risk the signal. To his great joy it was returned. He sprang forward to get on board, but before the bow of the wherry touched the sands the guards came round a point above in full pursuit.

It would not do to lose the boat, so he ordered it back, and once more ran into the shadow. He heard the guards pause to examine his tracks, and stepped forward to reconnoitre in case he had to fight, when they again pressed forward like hounds in full cry.

The foremost guard was nearly upon him when Captain Redmond retreated, backward, behind a rock, falling over a boulder into a deep shadow just as his pursuers came rushing to the spot. Accidentally tripping in this unexpected manner, the sword in his hand fell with a loud clang upon the rocks, to ring his death-knell, as it seemed, at that moment.

CHAPTER VI.

*Thou art a coward that thund'rest with thy tongue,
And with thy weapon nothing dar'st perform.*

Titus Andronicus.

The old saying that "Fortune favours the brave" was never more truly exemplified than in the case

of the captain of the "Marquise" on the night of his adventure on the sands.

He had drawn a long breath when he found that his own boat was so near at hand, but in a moment his joy was dashed by the arrival of the guards who came running on his track. Looking around the point, he saw the foremost but a few yards away.

Two courses were open to him, and two only—he must run or fight. To run was almost as dangerous as to face the guards, even at such odds; for he had lost so much time already that he could scarcely hope to reach the rendezvous before the tide would catch him; and, besides, his boat might linger here, after allowing the boat which would follow the guards to pass, and thus he should miss the "Marquise" when she came back on the coast for him.

All this passed like a flash through his mind, and the fearless man determined to trust to his good blade if fight he must. The foremost guard had nearly reached the point, and his panting could be distinctly heard when Captain Redmond sprang back to press himself as closely as possible against the rocks. In this backward movement he fell over a large boulder, and, rolling down upon the sand, his head fell beneath a projecting point, thus leaving little more than his boots exposed.

Had not the sword fallen with a clang upon the rocks he would have made no effort to rise; but, fearing that it had betrayed him, he tried to free himself, but only to find that he was firmly wedged in. More than that even, for his sudden fall had started a loose rock, washed out by many a tide, and it had toppled over upon his leg, giving him intense pain.

He suppressed a groan as the foremost guard came rushing by, followed by another and another, until five had passed and disappeared from his sight. Still he could hear the clanking of their swords as they kept up the chase; and soon after the sound of oars as the guard-boat was hurried on in pursuit.

The sand grew damp beneath him ere Captain Redmond dared make a motion, but he now saw that the tide would be upon him in a few moments, and he raised his hand to push the stone from his benumbed leg.

With a cry of horror he found that the rock was a vast mass which would require the combined strength of two or three unencumbered men to move. To add to the misery of that moment an incoming wave swept up the beach and drenched him to the skin. The least motion of his limb was intensely painful. Another wave swept in with added force, and, maddened to desperation, unheeding the excruciating pain that it gave him, the imprisoned man struggled for release.

But it was in vain. He had escaped from the guards, who were thirsting for his blood, only to die there by inches, a prey to the merciless tide.

And where was Parry?

"He was a coward to leave me, and I fighting for his safety," said Redmond, bitterly, "but he must have gone down the sands—and the guards will catch him for his cowardice. Ah! that I had stood at bay before them all."

Higher and higher came the tide—sullen and remorseless, and at last nearly suffocating him with every wave. It was all that he could do to keep his head above the water as it swept in. Yet why try longer? What hope of relief was there?

Captain Redmond, in that dread hour, wicked as his life had been, closed his eyes to repeat a prayer. It is ever thus when the dread moment comes, and we have to think of the world into which we shall soon be hurried. No matter what his life has been—no matter how much he has outraged humanity, even the worst man that has lived on earth, when brought face to face with death, will repeat a prayer that was taught him in the pure years of youth—taught him, perhaps, by a mother's lips.

Firmly believing that his last moment had come, Captain Redmond—he was Nicholas Kelloway then—closed his eyes to repeat a prayer. But his lips had not moved with the mockery, when a sound fell on his ear which brought him back to earth—which gave him life and hope. It was the signal of the "Marquise."

With all his strength he shouted in reply, and soon had the joy of hearing his cries answered. He heard the sound of oars, he heard the boat touch the sand but a few paces from the spot where he was lying, he heard the voices of his sailors as they rushed to his aid, then lost his consciousness entirely as his head fell back beneath a wave.

And where was Parry? "Now!" the brave captain had said to him as he sprang like a tiger from the jungle; but Parry had slowly slipped down the rocks, and was concealed in the bushes where the captain had laid the first guard upon the sand.

Quietly he stole out during the fray, stumbling over the sword which had been kicked towards him, and, leaving the captain to his fate, he had crept away. He heard the appeal to him to delay the wounded man; but, thinking of his own safety alone,

he ran at full speed down the beach, and made for the rendezvous which the captain had made known to him.

He was still running when a signal broke upon his ear, making him stop in terror; and he was about to run back for the protection of his comrade when he made out the wherry. He clambered over the side in hot haste.

"Push off, men, push off! The guards are upon us—push off!" he cried, with great excitement.

"Where is the captain?" asked one.

"He is taken—the guards have him! Push out at once, or they'll be upon us!" and he grasped the oar nearest him with frantic energy. The sailor pulled it away.

"Sit down, sir; we've dodged the guards often enough not to get caught now. Did you see them take the captain?"

"Yes, I saw it—don't wait for him—they were overpowering him as I ran."

"How many?"

"Three of them on him," said Parry, quickly, anticipating the question. "They have him sure enough; what good will it do him if we are taken too?"

"Only three?" said the man in the bow; "three of them could never take the master."

"But I tell you I saw—"

"Hist! what is that? Be silent if you would have us save you. Jack, what is that?"

Pushing Parry down in the stern of the boat, the sailor bent over the bows and listened intently.

"It's a tread, sure enough—there's but one. A guinea, Jack, that's the master."

Nearer and nearer came the sound, and they now heard distinctly the tread of a single man running along the sands. Slowly pulling the wherry in towards the shore, they again listened for the tramp. It had ceased entirely, but they knew that the man was near.

"There he is—I see him at the point," said Jack, in an undertone; "give her a push in."

The wherry came still nearer the shore, and now, those seamen, accustomed to look-out duty, were able to make out the figure of a single man—a mere shadow—upon the white sands.

It was then that the signal was given. With joy they answered it, knowing that the master had escaped; but before they could run the boat on shore the tramp of the guards was heard, in hot pursuit, but a few yards away.

Even then the men would have landed to join the captain in the fight that seemed unavoidable; but he ordered them back, and instantly was lost to their sight as he secreted himself. If behind the point, and against the dark shadow of the cliff.

On came the guards, their arms clanking as they ran, and their voices echoing across the water as they called to each other. The boat was now beyond sight from the shore, but the motions of the guards could be made out by sound. Before coming to the point the whole party halted, and for a moment chatted together, every word being distinctly heard in the boat.

"Bring the light—who has the lantern?" asked one, who seemed to be the leader.

"Here it is."

"Examine the sands here."

Faint flashes of light showed the forms of the men as they stooped to find the captain's tracks.

"Hero they are—fresh. Come on, men, we have him now. He cannot leave the sands. Before he gets down the tide will stop him."

They felt perfectly sure of their prey, for the steep cliff along the shore extended nearly two miles farther, and the tide was coming in rapidly.

"Is the boat coming?" asked one.

"Close behind us; do you not hear the oars?"

For a moment they listened, and the sound of the oars as the guard-boat pulled behind them, ready to take them off when stopped by the tide, came clear and distinct above the ripple of the waves.

Again they started on in pursuit.

"Now for it," said Jack, with bated breath; "if he stands there'll be fight worth seeing."

"The boat! the boat!" cried Parry, in alarm. "Push out, men; for Heaven's sake, push out, they are right upon us."

Again he caught the nearest oar in his excitement. With a subdued oath the seaman drew the oar from the water and raised it over Parry's head.

"I'll smash you if you touch it again," said he. "If we are caught it will be your fault. Do you think our necks are not worth as much to us as yours?"

"Hist! the boat!" whispered Jack, and, dipping their oars again, the sailors sent the light wherry back into the darkness, hearing the larger guard-boat rushing by, pulled by half-a-dozen stalwart arms.

Parry sank back, helpless and silent, giving himself up for lost. Generally he was a cool man in hours of danger; to-night he seemed to have lost his head entirely. But the seamen had been too often in similar situations to fear, and knew just how far they could venture with safety.

As the sounds of the boat grew indistinct with distance, they pushed the wherry in to reconnoitre. The tide had risen so that there was no longer danger of an attack by land. They had to watch the boat alone, and while one listened for it the other prepared to signal the rocks and crevices along the shore.

They had reached the point where the captain was last seen when their signal was answered. It was followed by a feeble cry. With all possible haste they ran the wherry on shore, the bow almost touching the rock beneath which the master was lying. So high had the tide risen that they touched the sand by his very side when leaping out to his relief.

Even then the water was several inches deep, and each incoming wave flooded them to the knees. Quickly they rolled the rock away, and, taking up the captain's unconscious body, laid it gently in the stern of the boat. Parry had not risen, but he took the drooping head upon his knees.

"What is that?" said Jack, suddenly, as he prepared to push off the wherry; and as the others looked towards him he thrust his hand down into the water, bringing something to the surface. "By my faith, he has brought one of their swords away," said he, with a voice which betrayed the pride that he felt in his captain's prowess.

"A burial-certificate for one of them," replied the other.

"Lucky I put my foot on it," said Jack, pushing the wherry from the sands, and springing into the boat.

Parry had taken the sword from the seaman's hand, but he dropped it immediately, while a feeling of shame, of mortification, as he remembered how the gallant captain had pushed it to him, even in the heat of the struggle, made the hot blood course through his veins.

It took but a few moments to pull the wherry away from the coast, and to get comparatively safe from pursuit. Resting on their oars, they turned to ask after the master.

"Happily no bones are broken, but the flesh is badly crushed," repeated Parry, who had been temporarily dressing the wound in silence.

"Is it serious?"

"Only a flesh wound. He'll be over it soon," and Parry was himself rejoiced to find that the captain's log had escaped the full weight of the rock, although it had been painfully bruised and lacerated.

"Give him some of this."

"Ah! just what I wanted," said Parry, taking the bottle of liquor from the seaman's hand, and pouring a little into the captain's mouth.

A deep sigh, followed by a moan, told that consciousness was returning, and presently the captain woke with a start. The terror of that terrible death was still upon him.

"Be quiet, Redmond, you are safe."

"Oh, Parry, is that you? How did I come in the boat? Jack, my good fellow—and you, Harden! Oh! I remember—you took me from the rock. *Sapristi!* I'd have fought the whole coast-guard rather than have endured that half-hour."

He tried to rise, but sank back from the pain of his wound.

"Keep still, Redmond; your leg is hurt a little."

"Tell me the truth, Parry—is it broken?"

"No, indeed, only a flesh wound."

"Ah! I gave three of them as bad," said he, with a laugh, as he again rested his head upon the doctor's knee.

Just then a light flashed in his face, and he drew attention to it.

"Another! 'Tis the 'Marquise!' The lantern, Jack!"

"It's under your seat, Harden," said the sailor; and, pulling it out, the canvas cover was twice removed in the direction of the former signal.

"She answers, captain—not more than a mile away."

"Pull for her, men. Do your best, it must be late. No landing to-night, doctor."

Seeing the sailors at work with a will, Captain Redmond gave way to the drowsy feeling which overcame him, and sank to sleep.

He woke with a start some half-hour later as the wherry struck forcibly against the side of the "Marquise."

It was long after three o'clock when the captain was raised over the side of his vessel and tenderly laid in his own bunk.

"Put her about, Lovett," he said to the mate. "Our adventure to-night will make a stir, and we could not go in without attracting suspicion. Put her out to sea, Lovett—crowd on sail."

The wind was favourable, and in a short time the "Marquise" was scudding away from the English coast.

Parry dressed the captain's leg afresh, and found the injury less than he had supposed when examined in the dark.

"It will be painful enough, Nick, and you are good for a week in bed."

"No worse?" asked the captain, with a smile. "Ah, doctor, doctor, this would not have happened had you stood by me like a man. Suppose I had been caught, what would your conscience have said?"

"Don't speak of it, Nick—I lost my senses entirely. You don't know how much depends upon my safety."

"It's the worth of a neck in either case, doctor. So you lost your head! A bad thing to do, as a general proposition; especially so when it makes you desert a friend when—"

"Say no more about it, Nick. I'll add five hundred pounds to our bond."

"Agreed! Make it a thousand, and I'll swear you fought like a Turk."

"Don't burthen your conscience with that, Nick; but just say nothing about it."

"A good paymaster always carries his point," said Redmond, dismissing the subject. "Send Lovett to me, will you, doctor?"

To the captain this night's adventure was but a simple item in a life made up of desperate adventures; and he thought it a fact of no importance that he had, single-handed, vanquished three of the Queen's coast-guard.

Parry went forward to call the mate, but at the foot of the companion ladder stumbled over a woman, who was crouched beside it.

"You, Dame Rachel—you here?" he said, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes, Parry, I've been watching for you. Did you not bid me?"

"But I did not mean you to sit up all night. Come on deck."

She followed him like a spaniel, and went aft while he paused to give the captain's message to Lovett. The watch was just called, and again the sailor who had given Victorine the word of caution took his place at the helm.

Parry soon joined the dame. Changing sides so that he could be as near them as possible, the sailor listened for some new development of the plot, of which he already had a slight idea.

Parry regarded the man keenly, but seemed satisfied with the scrutiny, and told the dame of his adventure.

"Oh, Parry, why will you risk your life so recklessly? Do you ever think what would become of me should you be lost?"

"At least you would be no worse off than when I first met you."

"How can you speak so to me?" she asked, with a reproving tone. "Could you place me back as I was then? Can you give youth and innocence? Can you restore to me the many years spent in your services? Oh, Parry, you are cruel to me!"

Covering her face, the dame sobbed out some further charges against him.

"Come, come, Rachel, stop crying. I've had worry of mind enough for one night. If you cannot talk of this matter let us go below. You know your reward when this is ended."

"How many times have you said that to me, Parry, and what have I ever gained from it?"

"Did I not get you the position as Sir Christopher's housekeeper? Besides, did I ever have a chance like this? It's the very one I've been working for, and now you will see that the money spent on these rough men was not spent for naught. They will work my will to any extent."

"Can you depend on them, Parry?"

"Have I not tested them this very night? They are under the spell of my gold, and it is a bill which this maiden must pay."

"But if you press her claim will she not know all, and defeat you?"

"I do not intend to press her claims, but my own. Through her I intend to make both Sir Christopher and my Lord Burghley use their influence with her Majesty to make me Percy of Northumberland."

"You grow bolder, Parry," said the dame, actually startled at the magnitude of the plot which Parry had conceived.

Could he have seen the malignant look of the dame at that moment, or had he understood the thrill of malicious delight which passed through her frame then, he had not felt so secure in his influence over her.

"Perhaps so, Rachel; my time has come. Help me through this and you shall have gold—gold—gold! You shall have enough to feast your eyes on for ever."

The words were hissed in her ear. Grasping her wrist firmly, he gave the word "gold" with increasing emphasis, well knowing the charm which its very sound had upon the woman before him.

Years before she had been as innocent and as pure as the maiden who then slumbered below; but, deceived, betrayed, her dearest feelings outraged and trampled upon, she had since struggled with the world, coming out of the contest a hardened, revengeful, avaricious woman. Then her heart throbbed for love alone; now it could be moved only by gold. Every human feeling had been

come subservient to this one all-absorbing passion.

"There," said Parry, pushing away the hand, "let us have done with this. Where are the jewels?"

"You heard her answer?"

"But did you not find out where she kept them?"

"How could I, Parry, without suspicion of my motives?"

"They must be in her box, then; but we must have them before dawn. What did Sir Christopher say? Hurry, we have little time left."

"It's a long story, but I'll make it as short as I can. One day a man came to him and they were locked in the library. I crept into the secret closet, but could only hear a part of what they said. The sum was that young Neville had heard that his cousin was alive."

"How could he have heard it?" asked Parry, quickly.

"I've no idea. He heard she was alive—nay, more, that she was near Rouen. He was searching for her then, but of course inquiring for her under her own name. Sir Christopher was in a dreadful state over the news. After paying the man he locked all the doors, and unlocked the cabinet to find the packet."

"He seemed satisfied it had not been touched, seeing the dust still on it, and was careful not to shake it off as he put it back into the secret drawer."

"Fool! how can men be such fools as to keep papers which must sooner or later betray them?" said Parry, but more to himself than to the dame.

It is a question that has often enough been asked both before and since Sir Christopher Hatton's time. There seems to be a fascination about the records of crime which preserve them; or is it the hand of fate interposing in the cause of justice and right?

"He put the packet back again," said the dame, without heeding Parry's remark, "and after locking the secret drawer called a servant. 'John,' said he, 'send the housekeeper in.' Parry, I nearly fainted from fright."

"But that was foolish, dame. How would he have known that you had copied the letters?" said Parry, seeing that she was trembling over the memory of her former fright.

"You have no pity on me, Parry. You forget that I am a woman. Had he accused me then, he would have seen guilt in my face."

"Well—the story."

"He threw himself into a chair when John left, and I sprang out into the passage. 'Dame Rachel,' he began, when I went in, 'take a seat; I have something of importance to tell you.'

"I was glad enough to hide my trembling by sitting, and he spoke kindly. 'You may not know,' said he, 'that I have a niece in France.' 'How should I have known it?' said I. 'True. Well, dame, I have a niece in France, and must bring her to England. Every family has some unpleasant history; have you not found it so, Dame Rachel?' 'Certainly, Sir Christopher,' I answered.

"He went on: 'It is true even of the Hattons. My sister's disgrace is a subject I care not to dwell upon, dame; nor can I recognise her child other than as a very distant relative. You have been a faithful housekeeper, Dame Rachel; would you still remain in my service?' 'I hope to leave it only when I go to my grave, Sir Christopher,' said I. 'Very good, dame, I will reward you well, and give you my name, if you agree to what I wish.'

"I assured him that I would obey him in all things. 'Good dame!' again said he, 'you are to be an aunt to this girl, and say that you are her mother's sister, distantly related to me.' He explained it to me, telling me the story I was to remember. 'You shall be provided with a cottage—my cottage in London, and enough to live upon; your sole duty will be to guard my niece, keeping her from any knowledge of her family by making her understand that any inquiries would result in her shame.' He then offered me—"

"The chance of going for this girl, which you accepted, and are now returning with your charge," interrupted Parry, speaking rapidly. "I understand it—see that you keep me informed of all things, dame, and beware of acquaintances. You do not know Neville?"

"Of course, I saw him when a boy, Parry; he was often at Latymer."

"But you would not know him now, so guard against all friends. So long as she believes herself a peasant girl there is little fear."

The dame sighed, and seemed about to reply, but suddenly changed her mind. She was going to tell him that there was something in this girl's blood which would tell her soon that she was not a peasant.

"On your arrival, go to your cottage, Rachel," said Parry, "and I will soon join you there. You must make me a welcome guest—see to it. Now then for these jewels."

The sailor at the helm had heard but a small portion of this conversation, but the concluding words

were plainly spoken, and as Parry and the dame went below he looked about him for one to give temporary relief.

Lovett himself came aft at that moment, and good-naturedly offered to take the helm. It was now near daybreak, and already the east was showing the first signs of dawn. The "Marquise" was far away from the English coast, and was still heading seaward.

Noisily the seaman crept into the cabin, and concealing himself near the conspirators, listened to catch their plan of action. The cabin lantern had been removed, and they were in total darkness.

"Here is the key," said Dame Rachel, coming from Victorine's apartment. "Oh, Parry, do not harm her—spare her, Parry! Can't you do without this?"

"What is the matter with you? Do you think I am going to murder her? Be assured that my desire is to spare her—come."

"But spare her feelings, I mean—why take these relics of her mother, when it would break her heart to lose them?"

"Because it is necessary. Are you afraid? If so, return to Wales, and I will find one who will aid me gladly for the reward that we shall have."

"No, no, I'm not afraid," replied she, but with a shudder at the bare thought of returning to her life in Wales. "I'm not afraid, Parry, but I would save her young heart from trouble—she is so sweet, so innocent, so pure, that I cannot bear to think of filling her heart with sorrow."

"Well, well, no harm shall come to her, I promise you that. It shall be my duty to guard her from it. Go in now, and stand before her."

As hard as she was, Dame Rachel had touches of human feeling, and even in the short time that they had been together Victorine had completely won her sympathy. Gazing upon her pure face, the dame was carried back to the past, and in memory saw her own child, and a mother's love pictured her as she was the girl now in her charge.

It was this thought which made her appeal to Parry to spare Victorine from sorrow; but he knew well that this tenderness would be of short duration, and hence pacified her with a promise which he had no intention of keeping should it suit him to do otherwise. He knew that, when weighed with her greed for money, all her sympathy would scarcely balance a single piece of gold.

But why this undue avarice? The sequel will show that Dame Rachel did not hoard her gold for the love of it alone, but for a deeper feeling—a passion which proved one of the most powerful incentives to human action.

For a moment after the two entered the maiden's room the seaman waited to see if she would not wake; but hearing no sound he crept up to the door. The dame was standing before the sleeping girl. Kneeling beside a box, with his back to the door, Parry was trying to fit the key into the lock.

He succeeded at length, but no sooner had he raised the lid than he received a powerful blow upon the head, and, with a single groan, was stretched upon the floor.

(To be continued.)

next companion. "His Royal Highness's toast—pass it on!" This was wit in action. It sealed Colonel Hamlyn's friendship with George IV. "Hamlyn," he said, with a slap on the shoulder, "you're a capital fellow."

HOW FIDO MADE HIS MASTER'S FORTUNE.

IT was a glorious sight, and the passengers of the ocean steamer "Alaska" gathered on the deck to watch the sun set, and slowly sink beneath the bosom of the broad Atlantic.

Gradually the company separated, some lingering in groups, while the greater number selected partners for a promenade.

More than one pretty maiden cast an admiring glance towards a young man who sat apart, and whose thoughts seemed apart—yes, far away from the surrounding scene.

He was a handsome man, and his attitude of unconscious grace displayed to the best advantage his manly beauty. By his side, around which his arm was caressingly thrown, was a noble Newfoundland dog. Fido—that was his name—made several attempts to draw his master's attention to the merry company, but without effect. Still gazing out on the wide expanse he stood, the wind playing with and blowing the dark waving hair off from the brow so broad, high, and clear.

There was a depth of earnestness in his dark blue eyes, a sweet, sad expression about his mouth, that made one think he had suffered: a lost hope, perhaps; and so it was.

Hugh Maynard had loved, as men sometimes do, with a love that can never be cast forth—that sinks deeper, ennobling and refining the heart in which it lives. Five years before, he had seen Edith Foster at the opera. Many times fate threw them near each other at public places, until there arose a sort of smiling acquaintance between them. And Hugh grew to love, with all the ardour of his ardent nature, the beautiful girl to whom he had never been introduced.

Believing the acquaintance would be agreeable to the lovely Edith, he sought a friend of hers, and requested to be presented. Then it was he heard that which crushed his hopes and left the impress of sorrow on his features.

That very day on which he had sought to know her she became the wife of a man old enough to be her father—ay, older than that—for she was twenty and he near sixty.

But what master's that? Was it not the most brilliant wedding of the season? Did not her anxious parents think they were doing the best to secure their daughter's happiness when they urged her to accept, and gave her to the man who could clothe her in robes rich and rare, and deck her with costly jewels? Thus it was that Hugh Maynard lost the object of his love.

Gazing out on the blue water and thinking of her—yes, still ever thinking, ever dreaming of her—Hugh Maynard remained until Fido grew impatient, and, raising his paw, tapped him several times, until at last Hugh turned and said:

"What is it, old fellow?"

And Fido's eyes answered so plainly:

"I love you; I am so sorry for you!"

Then he laid his head against his master's breast, and gazed so earnestly up into his eyes.

Hugh knew what Fido was telling him. And, patting the noble creature's head, he said:

"Yes, you love me! Good, faithful Fido! Come, I will walk round with you."

Turning round, he was about to join the promenaders, when he was stopped.

A beautiful boy of about five years came running up, and, throwing his little arms around Fido, exclaimed:

"Oh, you nice, beautiful dog! Come play with Willie."

An instant more, before Hugh could speak to the child, a little scream, a frightened exclamation, and lady darted across the deck and caught up the child, and, drawing him away, exclaimed:

"Oh, that terrible dog! He might have torn you to pieces! Pray keep him away, sir!" Then turning to another person who came hastily up, she said:

"Nurse, you must be more careful. Do not let Willie go near that frightful dog again."

Hugh was about to assure the lady of Fido's harmless and noble nature, when, as his eyes met hers, he became speechless, for there before him stood the woman that he had loved so long.

If, during those years gone by, she had ever thought of him, or remembered at all the silent admirer of her girlhood days, she failed to recognise him then. She was much excited, and, moving off, thought probably that the gentleman was offended by her possibly uncalled-for expressions relative to his favourite.

Daily she was before him—"so near, and yet so far"—so very far, for them, when constantly he be-

held her leaning on the arm of an elderly, fine-looking old gentleman; he could fully recognise the gulf between them. Often he would hear the little Willie calling "Papa." Then he wondered if that woman, so young and beautiful, could be constant. He sought no introduction. He felt it would be madness to be near, to speak to her, and have her sweet voice lingering in his ear.

Fido grew very fond of little Willie, but neither mother nor nurse would allow him to approach when they were near.

But nevertheless the friends managed to steal occasionally a chance to caress, when the watching ones were absent. Frequently, however, Fido heard himself called ugly names: "Horrid dog," "Terrible creature," and such like. Seven days had passed thus when an event transpired that caused a very marked and favourable change in Fido's behalf.

It was the dinner hour. Little Willie was on deck with his nurse, and she, seizing the opportunity afforded by the absence of the parents and others, of whom she was rather shy, was having a nice chat with one of the crew, and he was telling her just what she wanted to hear—"how charming she was, and how he loved her."

Willie was entirely forgotten. He was having a good time too, amusing himself without interruption. He had mounted on the bulwarks, and was playing riding horse, when his attention was called to something in the water. With a shout he threw up his arms, bent eagerly forward—another instant, and the cry: "Willie is overboard!" was caught, echoed, and reechoed until it reached the dining saloon. But ere the terrified friends had reached the deck one was "to the rescue."

As the eager, anxious, tearful eyes were bent upon the water, Fido rose above the agitated waves, holding up his precious burden.

A triumphant cry greeted his ear—a shout of joy, thankfulness, and encouragement.

A moment after a boat was lowered, and the noble fellow gently placed the insensible boy in the arms of the man waiting to receive him, and sprang in beside him.

"Brave Fido!" "Noble fellow!" "Good! faithful true!" were the words that greeted him as he returned to the deck.

The mother had fainted as she reached the deck, but in a short time both she and her darling were doing well.

Fido watched anxiously for Willie's look of recognition. Before long he was rewarded. Willie's arm was feebly raised to place it around his friend's neck. Then the mother's fears were for ever chased away; and with her heart filled with gratitude to the faithful creature she too clasped her arms around him, and Fido said—I mean with his eyes:

"Now you know I am not a bad fellow."

From that hour the child and Fido were inseparable.

The next morning the old gentleman came up to Hugh, and said he had been sent by Willie's mother to try and induce him to let her have Fido. She would give any reasonable sum—yes, and more than that—to possess him.

Hugh decidedly refused to part with his favourite.

"Could no inducement be offered you?" asked the old gentleman; "no amount of money?"

"No, sir; money cannot buy Fido. We cannot be separated."

"Well, come with me. I will present you to my daughter, and perhaps she can talk you into feeling more favourably disposed."

"Your daughter!" Hugh was about to exclaim, but he repressed the words, and followed mechanically the old gentleman, and was introduced.

He heard her sweet voice calling his name, pleading with him. Could he be dreaming? Was it he beside her? Was she smiling as in those days gone by? Where was her husband? Then a thought, swift and full of hope, came to him. Her black robes! What mean they? Was she free?

He yielded to the hope, and lingered near her side; but she could not induce him to part with Fido.

When after a while he was alone with Willie he asked: "Where is your papa, Willie?" Then came the words that gave back hope, and whispered of life and love at last!

"One papa is here; and one Heaven took away!"

But two days remained ere they would reach New York, then and there to part again, perhaps for ever. Hugh made the very best of his few remaining hours.

It was the continual and earnest request of Edith:

"Let us have Fido!"

"I cannot. Nothing but death can separate us."

"Mr. Maynard, you are an artist. Money will further your prospects, and aid your object in the pursuit of art. I will give fifty pounds for Fido!"

"I cannot; indeed I cannot."

"Two hundred!"

"Not for ten! He is the only being that I know loves me. You would not take him, knowing that?"

She left him then. How? In anger and disappointed, perhaps!

It was the last day, almost the last hour. The shores of the new world were so near! so soon they would have to bid adieu!

They stood together—Hugh and the woman he so truly loved. Willie was clasping Fido, crying, and declaring he would not leave his friend.

"I must have him!" again she pleaded. "What can I say, what offer can I make, to induce you to yield?"

"You know my heart! you know what has lived for years there! Give me your love. Take me—then Fido will be your own!" he replied.

It was not the best place in the world for a love scene. Edith knew that, and, looking at Hugh, but speaking to Willie, she said:

"You shall have Fido, Willie. Mr. Maynard has given him to us."

Thus he won his love.

Six months after, on their return to their native land, Edith and Hugh were united.

Fido sat looking up into his master's eyes, a few days after, and Edith said:

"How knowing he looks!"

"He is telling me how much he contributed to make me so happy," answered Hugh. "Noble, faithful, true Fido! How completely you won your mistress's affection!" continued the happy Hugh, speaking to and patting Fido.

With her eyes beaming with love, Edith said:

"Is he telling you too, that noble natures must eventually win appreciation, and that the faithful and true are rewarded with success? Ah, who could help loving such? So it must, it is, and will ever be!"

F. H. B.

LADY IDNELLA.

It was a lovely evening in May. The light of the setting sun fell clear and bright on the broad canals and quiet lakes of Venice. A slight breeze just stirred the surface of the water, and from the edge of every ripple the reflected rays sparkled like diamonds, encircling in a flood of light the lofty palace of marble which rose from the very bosom of the waters. The day had been fitful and showery, but the sun had just burst forth, and was setting in all his splendour, while the ragged edges of the clouds hung above the resplendent rays, and the inky blackness of the eastern sky only formed a better contrast to the brilliant rainbow that now spanned the heavens.

At the entrance of one of the principal streets a slight gondola might be seen slowly drifting over the water. It contained two men, but they were far too deeply engaged in their conversation to pay much attention to the beauty of the scene, or to the course which they were pursuing. The elder was a short, thick-set man, with a dark complexion, a low forehead overhung with curling black hair, and features every one of which bore the stamp of a villain and a successful villain. His companion was tall and slight, but his lithe and well-formed frame indicated the possession of great strength. The elder was now speaking.

"Yes, Abellino, the laws of our band are imperative that no one can be admitted to full membership till he has shed blood. In one way or another your name has been joined with almost every audacious deed committed by us for some months past, but you well know you have taken no active part in any of them. To-night I call upon you for a decisive proof of your loyalty to me. You know the relentless cruelty with which the doge has pursued us, and the many insults he has heaped upon us. This is the hour which his niece, whom he has adopted, the beautiful Idnella, is wont to pass in the palace gardens. The entrance is known to you, and when once you have gained access to her your way is plain."

"But why punish her for her uncle's sins?" said Abellino.

"It will be the direst vengeance on him," replied the other, passionately. "But no more of this," he added, after a moment's pause; "it is your province to obey unquestioningly."

Abellino merely beat his head in answer, and for a moment the gondola glided on in silence, when he resumed:

"But should Lady Idnella be surrounded by her guards?"

"The greater the danger the greater the bravery shown in overcoming it," replied his companion; "but, lest the risk be too great, I will myself accompany you and be at hand to assist you."

And he added in a low tone to himself:

"I shall then be sure you do not play me false, fellow."

They now stopped, and, fastening their gondola, passed through a low door which closed behind them. But before we follow them farther we must inform our readers who the individuals were.

The elder, Matteo Fezzano, or Mattano, as he was

usually called by his companions, was the leader of a band of robbers that had long infested Venice, and eluded the most careful search of the police. The most terrible crimes were committed even in the face of day, but in no case could the slightest clue be obtained to the perpetrators of the outrage.

Abellino was the youngest of the band, and the latest accession to their number. They were unable even to imagine how he had gained information of their retreat, nor would he disclose the secret to them. They had imagined themselves secure from all intrusion, but one night as they were engaged in earnest conversation on some of their future enterprises, this young man suddenly entered and asked admission to their band. A stormy debate ensued. The boldness of the youth in venturing alone among them, and his noble bearing, captivated the fancy of some of the robbers, but others insisted that no strangers could be admitted, and that instant death was the only fitting penalty for the discoverer of their secret.

After a long contest it was decided, though only by a single vote, that the life of Abellino should be spared, and his request granted. But Matteo had never been his friend. He thought he saw in the expression of the young man's face a will which might shake his authority should their views clash, and, moreover, he feared his loyalty to their cause. But no rupture had as yet occurred, and they were now engaged together in the enterprise where we have just left them.

After passing through the door, Abellino hastily assumed the disguise of an old man, and the two pursued the palace gardens through passages well known to these men, to whom every nook and corner of the city was familiar.

The lovely Idnella was sitting in a low garden chair. Her guitar lay beside her hat—it was untouched, and she was looking dreamily around as if her thoughts were far away from the scene before her. Her golden hair fell in ringlets over her shoulders, and, surrounded by the beautiful flowers and foliage, she formed a picture of unsurpassed loveliness.

"Let a whistle be the signal in case you should need my assistance," said Mattano, while he ensconced himself in a secure hiding-place among the shrubbery.

Abellino went forward with the attitude and manner of a beggar. Idnella started up as steps approached, and exclaimed, in surprise, not unmixed with fear:

"How came you here? No one is permitted entrance at this hour to these gardens. Speak, old man! What do you wish? Is it alms?"

By this time Abellino stood close at her side, and, bending down, he said, in a low, meaning whisper:

"What if life be sought, lady, the life of the young and beautiful, and not merely gold?"

"What say you?" gasped Idnella, almost paralysed with terror. "Old man, who are you?"

"No old man," said Abellino, throwing off his long beard and his mendicant's dress, but still retaining his mask, "for I am Abellino."

Idnella shrieked, and Mattano, mistaking this for the signal, started forward. Abellino stood with his drawn dagger uplifted, and exclaimed:

"Your life, Lady Idnella, I was bid to seek, but can I even threaten a life without which the world would have no brightness to me?" and, turning suddenly, he plunged his weapon in Mattano's breast and disappeared.

All was terror and confusion in the ducal palace that night. The government of the doge was by no means firmly established. His power was constantly set at naught and his authority insulted by the deeds of these insolent robbers, and now his own child had been insulted, her very life threatened, within the precincts of his own palace. They had dared to commit murder in her very presence, and to stain his grounds with blood. No clue to their discovery could be found, and, moreover, very evident signs presented themselves that a conspiracy was now forming to overthrow his power entirely, and give his place to another. The doge well knew that should these shrewd and skilful villains unite with the disaffected among the nobles enough rebels might be found to accomplish this purpose. But who were these audacious robbers?—this mysterious Abellino, whose name for the past six months had been the watchword at every crime?

The doge had questioned Idnella, but, overcome by fear, she had closed her eyes, and could give no description of his appearance after he threw off his disguise, and his features were closely concealed by his mask.

While the doge thus sat buried in reflection, a page entered and announced that Paoli, one of the council, was without, and asked audience.

"Let him enter," said the doge, and a cordial greeting was exchanged between the two.

"I came," said Paoli, after a few moments' conversation, "to ask you to receive at court a young friend of mine, who has just arrived, Floredo Monchenigi. He is of the ancient Monchenigi family, and his father married my only sister. He was my best friend, and for his sake the young man would be dear to me even if he were not allied to me by the near tie of blood."

"He shall be welcome," said the doge; "but where has he been for these many years?"

"After the quarrels between the Monchenigi and the Corsini, which resulted in his father's death, he was sent to Florence to be educated. Of late he has passed some time in travelling, and has been nobly serving against the infidel Turks in the defence of Malta. He left the island some time since, and as I had never been informed of his arrival, I feared that he had perished at sea; but yesterday he suddenly appeared. He is now purposing, should your highness give consent, to assume his title and take possession of his estates."

"Will he be faithful to our cause?" said the doge. "or is there danger that he may lean to the side of the disaffected?"

"I will answer for him," rejoined Paoli; "and tomorrow morning we will seek you."

The next morning all Venice rang with the news that the robbers were at last discovered. Groups of eager citizens stood on the broad stairs, or were gathered in the squares fronting the churches, all discussing the events of the night, and seeking further information.

A Jew, who had obtained access to some of the soldiers, soon spread the news that the information had been given by Floredo Monchenigi, and that he himself had headed the detachment employed in the capture.

Much question ensued who this young man was that had rendered such signal service, and when the people learned that he belonged to the old family of the Monchenigi, so popular in Venice, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. But one of the band had escaped, and some could not resist a feeling of terror on hearing that this was the dreaded Abellino, who had at the time been absent.

The doge received Paoli and Floredo with the utmost joy, overwhelming the latter with expressions of his gratitude.

"To you alone we owe this noble deed," said he, "and thus is Venice delivered. Though one remains, he can do nothing unassisted, and you have taken away the only stain upon my government."

"I hope," said Paoli, "that my fears of Abellino may prove unfounded, but on the church of St. Mark's itself is now placed a declaration signed by Abellino, to the intent that, do what we may, destroy the band if we choose, or persecute him by every means in our power, he will be ever ready to defend us."

"Is it so?" said the doge, thoughtfully; but, turning to Floredo, he resumed, "Thanks are but poor reward for such a service as this, and I have no fit favour to grant for it, but ask anything in my power and it shall be instantly yours."

"May I first crave your permission to weary you with a tale of my past life?" began Floredo, with some embarrassment.

"With pleasure," said the doge; "but what has that to do with your reward?"

"You shall see," said Floredo. "The last few years of my life have been spent in fighting against the infidel Turks, under a commander whom I revered and loved. His daughter I had often seen in her father's palace, and I secretly adored her. One day we had a severe contest. Our commander was severely, we feared even mortally wounded; our troops had been defeated, and a large portion of the town, with many prisoners, had been seized by the Turks.

"Towards evening I stood with several of my companions near a retired part of the shore, when a group of veiled figures, about twenty in number, passed us, guarded by three Turkish soldiers. While I was idly gazing on them, imagining it the harem of some pacha of wealth, one of the girls turned towards us, and, seeing the cross we bore, exclaimed, wildly:

"Save me, save me!"

"The pure Italian at once betrayed to me the truth that these were Christian captives on their way to the slave market at Constantinople. I shouted to my companions, 'To the rescue!' and in a moment we were engaged hand to hand with the Turkish guard. The struggle was fierce, for the galley was moored close at hand, and they knew that, could they reach it, they were safe; but our numbers were vastly superior, and we were soon masters of the field. While my companions hurried the terrified girls, who as yet could hardly realise their deliverance, to a place of safety, I bore one fainting form to a neighbouring spring. As I drew back her veil to

bathe her forehead, I recognised the beautiful features of my commander's daughter. When she awoke to consciousness I could no longer restrain my passion, and I poured forth my love in burning words. She turned from me in apparent terror, and entreated me to carry her to her parents.

"I obeyed in silence, for how could I, an unknown soldier of fortune, dare lift my eyes to her? But now for her sake I have done Venice this service, and have added glory and renown to my name, may I ask your permission to pay my court to Lady Idnella, your adopted daughter, for it is she of whom I have been speaking?"

The doge had suspected this from the beginning of the story, but as Floredo pronounced her name he said, with forced composure:

"This must not be. This is the only boon I cannot grant, for my daughter must be united with a royal house. Think of some other way in which I may require your services, but never mention this again."

Floredo had sunk on one knee as he proffered his request, but he now rose proudly, saying:

"Lady Idnella knew me only as a base-born soldier when she spurned me, but now I come with my proper rank, and my house is as noble as your own. But I will yet do deeds to win her."

"You are hopeful," said the doge, "but it is useless. She must be the bride of the Florentine. Go now, but think of some other reward."

Floredo bowed and passed out, but no sooner was he alone than his fierce passion broke forth uncontrolled.

"Have I toiled and struggled all in vain? Have I perilled my life for her, and is she never to be mine?"

He was silent for a moment, then exclaimed:

"Would I commit a crime, it could not aid me, for she would spurn me from her with scorn and loathing; but noble deeds shall yet win her."

For awhile all was quiet in Venice. Abellino was unheard of, and the public peace was preserved. Floredo appeared at court, but seldom, and never again did he mention his suit to any one. The negotiations for the Florentine marriage went on slowly. The doge had commissioned Monetta, the former governess of his niece, who now held the position of companion, to sound her views of the alliance, but Idnella gave only evasive answers, declaring her unwillingness to leave her uncle, and requesting permission to retire into a convent rather than marry.

The doge was perplexed. He had given a solemn promise to his brother never to force Idnella to marry against her consent, but this reluctance seemed to him inexplicable. He at length suspected a previous attachment, and tried to extort some confession himself from Idnella, but she still persisted in her refusal to give any reason for her rejection of the match, and asked only to be left unwearyed by this persecution.

But while the doge was thus engaged darker storms were closing around him. The conspiracy which he had feared, for some time was just on the eve of breaking forth. A few violent men were dissatisfied with the mild and just sway of the doge, which afforded no room for their lusts and vices, and they longed for greater licence. It is moreover the fate even of the very best of governments to raise enemies, and in this case there were those who desired to establish a freer form. These had united, and a meeting was to be held at the house of Pandolfo di Guido, one of the disaffected nobles, on the evening of the very day when the doge had held this interview with Idnella. They came from all ranks in the city, and the room was soon filled.

"We wait only for Angelo Ursini to decide on measures for an instant attack," said one of the brothers Corolini, who was foremost in the conversation.

"We must first gain over the captains of the soldiers," said Pandolfo, "and make ourselves master of the armoury."

"But how can this be done?" said one, "when we have such vigilant officers as Cardenio and Paoli? The police would be on our track."

"There is Angelo," said Pandolfo.

All paused for a moment, when, a low whistle was heard, and the door opened, but, instead of Angelo, a tall, slight figure presented itself, masked, as were all the conspirators.

"Who and what are you?" demanded Pandolfo. "I am Abellino," was the reply, accompanied by a scornful laugh.

"Abellino!" said Pandolfo, "Abellino! Are we discovered, or are you the spirit of evil himself to penetrate hither without a guide?"

"The reward offered for your head should make you beware of such boldness," said one of the conspirators, with a menacing gesture.

"Not so fast," said Abellino, while a smile of exultation played over his masked features. "I did not

venture into the lion's den without being prepared to resist his claws. I have left information behind me that would bring every one of you to the scaffold, should a hair of my head be injured. Now do your pleasure."

The conspirators were terrified. Abellino knew too much to be disregarded. It was dangerous to kill him. To receive him was their only resource. Abellino watched the dispute that ensued with a meaning smile, which was concealed under his mask, but at length said, calmly:

"You must take me. I am at your service. Lay any command upon me and I will execute it."

"Then," said Pandolfo, with sudden boldness, "we desire the immediate death of the councillor Paoli, and to-morrow night you must bring as his sign ring as an assurance that the deed is done."

"But," said Abellino, "what pledge will you give me of your faith to me?"

"A written promise to pay you five hundred florins when you place Paoli's ring in my hands, and as a token by which to demand payment, here is my own signet."

Abellino bowed, took the ring, and disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. The next morning the doge was early informed that messengers in great haste were in waiting for him.

"My lord," said one, as soon as they were admitted, "we come to request instant action from you. Last night the chamber of our master Paoli was forced open, he himself dragged away by violence, and no trace of him can be discovered. We are uncertain of his fate. The canals near the house have been dragged, but no clue has as yet been found. His nephew, Floredo, has himself headed one party in the search. The clothes of the couch are torn, as if he had struggled violently, and down the staircase, and all through the hall are marks of force, but with not one of us heard a sound. On the wall of the chamber is written in large, bold characters: 'I am Abellino.'"

"Ha!" said the doge, "does that villain still brave our power? Send out faithful soldiers and officers assisted by the most skilful among the police. Let them examine every corner of the city. This rascal we must at all hazards find."

The men retired, and then did the doge venture to give vent to his feelings.

"My faithful Paoli! my almost only friend! Art thou, too, gone? I have tried to govern Venice mildly and justly, but these assassins can commit any crime and I am powerless against them. And soon I shall be sacrificed to a base conspiracy. Well," he exclaimed, after a moment's pause, "I will at least do my duty now."

That night the conspirators met again, and were exulting on the supposed success of their plan, when Abellino entered as quietly as before, and laid Paoli's ring on the table. Pandolfo seized it with a gesture of fierce hatred, and seemed to glut his malice with the very sight of it.

"What more do you wish from me?" said Abellino. "The death of the other—of Cardenio."

"But when do you proceed to open rebellion?"

"Three days hence, at the birthday fete of Lady Idnella. We can carry weapons, while the doge and his unsuspecting friends will be unarmed. We can easily make ourselves masters of his person and of the palace. Enough of our party will be there to ensure success, and many will join us when they see the power in our hands."

"The soldiery are to be gained over," said one of the Corsini, "then our success is sure."

Abellino bowed and again disappeared, but this time he took his stand behind some of the rich tapestry which adorned the room.

"I like not this man," said Angelo Ursini, who was now present; "we are far too deeply in his power."

"Yes," said one of the Corsini, "but this course is inevitable. We must receive him as a friend, or he would have been a most bitter enemy. But now to our plans."

"Fiotto, the chief banker," said Angelo, "has promised us five hundred florins down, and, should the struggle be protracted, he will engage to provide provisions for our soldiery for three days."

"And Giacco di Lampi," said one of the Corsini, "has stored his house with weapons, with which, if worst come to worst, we can arm the mob."

"Yes," said Pandolfo, "they will not dare desert us now, for here is their written promise to this effect; should we give these to the doge, their heads would be on the scaffold as soon as our own."

So saying, he flung the letters on the table.

"Then," said Angelo, "with you for our doge, and Lady Idnella for your bride, we may hope for happiness in Venice."

Pandolfo smiled, but the Corsini and some others, who had ambitious views of their own to gratify, looked ill pleased, and the party separated without

further words. As the door closed behind the last one, Abellino sprang forward and secured the papers which Pandolfo had carelessly left on the table.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "Giaco di Lampi and Elio are well in my power now. A detachment of police shall secure their houses, and with these in my hands, their heads will not be worth much."

The doge sat the next morning absorbed in mournful thoughts. Cardenio, too, had disappeared, and in the same most mysterious manner. There was evidently some plan for the destruction of his faithful adherents. As he was revolving all the circumstances and endeavouring to find some clue to the actors in this mystery, a page entered and announced Floredo Monchenig.

"Let him enter," said the doge.

A ray of hope flashed across him that the young man would bring him assistance, or at least good counsel.

"Welcome," he exclaimed, rising cordially to greet him; "you have come just when I need you most. I only hope you have some aid for me."

"I come with news of troubles and difficulties," said Floredo, calmly, "but I have at the same time a plan of escape from them. A man has just placed in my hands information of the existence of a most dangerous conspiracy, which is just ready to disclose itself to the ruin of your power. Pandolfo di Guido, Angelo Ursini, the two Corsini, and several other nobles are engaged in it, and they hope to be supported by an extensive rising among the people."

"When will they begin, and what steps shall I take to counteract their plans? Shall I instantly order the arrest of the chief conspirators? But on what proof can I do this?"

"The proofs I hold in my possession. I will bring them forward in due time. Do not be too hasty. The plans of the conspirators are now well matured. Since Paoli and Cardenio have been removed, they have now, as they imagine, nothing more to fear from their care and vigilance. On the morrow they will try to gain over the soldiery, and the next day, at your niece's festival, you are to be arrested with all the chief nobility, not implicated with them. Pandolfo is to have your place, and the other offices will be divided among his party."

"What, here in my own palace?" gasped the doge, "on my child's birthday? I knew of this conspiracy, or at least suspected it, but I never imagined such audacity."

"Let us be brave, my lord, and we shall foil them yet," Floredo went on. "I myself will visit the captain of the guard on duty at the palace. I know him well, and believe him a loyal subject of your highness, but even if he were not, he is bound to me by many favours. He will assume an appearance of consent when Pandolfo sounds him, and will thus lead him to a full betrayal of his plans. The conspirators, imagining themselves secure of him, will seek no farther aid, knowing that the soldiery will follow their commander. But, pardon me, perhaps I am presumptuous, and interfering with your better counsels."

"Go on, go on!" said the doge, "my friend—but no, you are more than a friend, for friends render mutual benefit, but you return good for evil. Give what assistance you can to an almost despairing man."

"Then, your highness, we will let them go on laying new snares for themselves till the fête day, when we can be ready with all our strength to thwart them? Let orders be given to the guards to disarm every man who enters the palace that day. Our friends will need none, for we are secure of the soldiery, while the conspirators will begin their game, unmasking the soldiery are on their side, and then they will fall an easy prey to us."

"Good," said the doge. "Do you hasten to your friend, while I give orders for the security of the palace. But," he added to himself as Floredo left the room, "I am only incurring new obligations to this young man. Heaven grant he may not again demand my niece's hand. This very night must the treaty for the Florentine alliance be concluded, lest any false hopes be raised. Duke Lorenzo's ambassador is even now waiting an answer in the city, and the betrothal can be announced on Idnella's birthday."

The next day passed off quietly, but the doge could not rid himself of apprehension. He had endeavoured to gain Idnella's consent to the Florentine marriage, but she rejected all proposals, and all hope of the projected betrothal was resigned.

The next morning rose clear and bright—such a morning as only June gives us, and all the preparations for the festival were made. The great hall of the ducal palace was magnificently decorated, and strains of the finest music filled the air. A few of the guests were assembled early, but a slight feeling of constraint was visible among them, occasioned by the unusual demand of giving up their arms. None

of the conspirators, however, had yet arrived. Soon Pandolfo entered, accompanied by the two Corsini, their faces showing evident signs of alarm.

"I will soon discover," said the former, "if we are marked, or if the command is general;" and, turning, he addressed one of the nobles standing near him, saying:

"A somewhat strange request to disarm noble Venetians! Are we to be left weaponless?"

"I believe so," replied the other. "I myself do not fully understand the reason of it, but the orders were that no weapons should intrude on the peaceful festival of Lady Idnella, lest there be a risk of disturbance."

Pandolfo carried on a light conversation for some moments, then returned to his companions, saying:

"All is right. Every one is unarmed. Yet, he added, in a lower tone, "I like not this folly. Though the soldiers will come to our aid as soon as we give the signal, yet I fear me something is wrong. Curses on that Abellino! Can he have betrayed us?"

"On me?" whispered a voice in his ear. Pandolfo turned, and met the grinning visage of Abellino. "Ha, ha! curses on me!"

Pandolfo stood rooted to the spot with amazement, and, before he could recover himself sufficiently to speak, Abellino was lost among the crowd. He spoke of this encounter to no one, but over himself and gradually over the other conspirators an indefinite sort of terror seemed to steal, palying their thoughts, and doing more fatal injury to their cause than any open attack of their enemies.

Meanwhile the fête went on right merrily. The loveliest daughters of Venice were present, and with the gay young cavaliers presented a most happy spectacle, all unconscious of the storm gathering about them. The doge was watching the guests narrowly. Already the whispered conversation, unquiet gestures, and lowering brows of some whom he knew to be among the disaffected had excited his anxiety for the appearance of Floredo. To him had been given the entire conduct of this affair, but the doge had not seen him the whole day, and though time passed on, he did not appear.

"Can he, too, be among the conspirators? and is this only a ruse to disarm my adherents?" thought the doge as many anxious thoughts passed through his mind. "How could Floredo have obtained this information unless he was in the confidence of the conspirators?"

He repelled these suspicions as unworthy of the noble youth, but again and again, as he thought of his strange deeds and his mysterious knowledge, they would return.

The conspirators, meanwhile, grown bold by the long delay, were gathering round that part of the hall where the doge stood, and Pandolfo was just on the point of giving the signal of attack and the rallying cry to the soldiers, when the great doors opened with a loud clang, and Floredo strode across the hall, followed by a band of guards. He made a low obeisance to the doge, then said, in a commanding tone:

"I come, your highness, with your permission, to arrest here, in your presence, the arch-traitor Pandolfo di Guido and his accomplices."

The sudden silence that had fallen on the assembled company at the entrance of the armed soldiery made every word of this speech distinctly audible. Pandolfo, nerved by despair, sprang forward. He gave the signal to the soldiers, but it was disregarded, and he saw he was betrayed. Nothing remained but to boldly deny the intended crime, and thus perhaps save himself from destruction.

"Who is this?" he exclaimed, "that dares accuse a noble knight of Venice? It is a base plot against me. Let him bring proofs, your highness."

"Are proofs wanting?" said Floredo. "Did you not but one short moment since give a signal intended to doom to death not only the doge but many of his guests?"

"The proofs?" said the audacious Pandolfo. "The proofs. You will not let this minion's mere word weigh against mine?"

"I am no minion," said Floredo, bravely, "but the son of a Venetian house whose nobility will more than vie with yours. Already have I done Venice noble service, and—"

"Yes," interrupted Pandolfo, "but how have you done that service? No honourable man could have had dealings with those robbers. Your highness, he may even now be in league with Abellino, and, believe me, he aims to destroy your power by first inducing you to destroy your best friends. Let him be arrested instantly."

The doge stood perplexed. His former suspicions of Floredo would return, but he could believe no real crime of this brave man. At length he said, hesitatingly:

"The proofs against Pandolfo, you must produce them."

"I crave leave of absence for a moment, and they shall be in your hands;" and before an answer could be given Floredo had disappeared.

Before Pandolfo, enraged at this, could decide what course to pursue, a side door opened, and with a light step a man sprang into the centre of the hall, exclaiming:

"I am Abellino!"

A sudden cry of surprise and terror followed, and some of the soldiers started forward as if to seize him. He waved them back with a commanding gesture, and said:

"I come, your highness, sent by Floredo Monchenigo, to bear witness in his cause. In your hands," turning to the doge, "I place Pandolfo's signet ring, which your highness can return to him at your pleasure. Also these two papers, containing each a promise to pay me five hundred florins, one for the murder of Paoli, the other for that of Cardenio. Here also are letters from their accomplices, promising arms and other aid."

Pandolfo turned pale as death, but he summoned courage still to reply:

"By his own confession, this man is a robber and a villain. Now he is hired by Floredo against me."

"Is not this signature your own?" said the doge, "under which you pledge your ring as security for the payment of this money?"

"No," said Pandolfo, incoherently, "and I demand that man's instant arrest."

"In the name of Floredo Monchenigo I am sent," cried Abellino, starting forward, "but—" tearing off his cloak and mask, "I am Floredo Monchenigo!"

The assembly had remained breathless with excitement during this scene, but now a cry of amazement broke from all. Even the doge himself could not restrain his surprise. Floredo now broke silence.

"Proofs enough you have had of these men's guilt already, methink, your highness, but if anything more is wanting, there is the captain of the guard whom they tried to win over to their side, and to whom they made a full avowal of their plans."

Folded at every turn, the conspirators saw nothing but destruction before them.

"Merry, merry, your highness!" they cried, with cowardly fear.

The doge made them no answer, but with a scornful gesture ordered them to be taken into custody by the guard.

" Ere we separate," said Floredo, "I crave permission to give some explanation of my conduct. First, I must prove my innocence of one crime of which I am accused. At a sign from him a side door was opened, and Paoli and Cardenio entered. Pandolfo covered his face with his hands. The doge sprang forward with a cry of joy.

"These faithful friends," said Floredo, "at my earnest request, and assurance that your safety might depend upon it, conspired, though somewhat timorously, to short confinement in my palace. They also entrusted to me their signets. You know the use I made of them. My course here has been plain enough for you to see that no stain rests upon me. How I became a member of the robber band demands further notice. I dogged them and spied upon them till I found means to enter among them. Once there, I learned their secrets and plans, till I was able to deliver them up after slaying their leader. I have risked the chances of imminent death, and you know also why I have done this; but a Mouchenigo never urges a once-rejected suit."

He turned away, but the doge sprang forward and embraced him tenderly.

"My more than son," he exclaimed, "you have conquered. She is yours to win if you can. Idnella, can you refuse any boon to the deliverer of Venice?"

All this time Idnella stood pale and terrified, but protected by a knot of cavaliers who surrounded her. When Abellino threw off his disguise, her emotion overcame her, and she covered her face with her long veil. She now came forward and placed her hand in that of Floredo.

"Bless you, bless you, my children," said the doge, tenderly.

"Grant, your highness, one boon more, that no cloud may mar our happiness," said Floredo. "Let these unfortunate men be pardoned."

"And the robbers, too," said Idnella, "for Floredo has lived among them, and many were kind to him."

"Your boon is granted, Idnella," said the doge. "Their leader is gone, and on promise of giving up this way of life they shall be free. As for the conspirators, for your sake, Floredo, they shall be pardoned, if they will ask forgiveness here, and swear loyalty for the future," which they did.

A few weeks after, a splendid wedding celebrated the union of Floredo and Lady Idnella.

A. M.



ALEXANDER II., EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.]

THE CZAR OF ALL THE RUSSIANS.

SOVEREIGN of half Europe, lord of one-third of Asia, ruler of one-seventh of the surface of the world, and irresponsible master of eighty millions of people, the Czar of all the Russias known no equal upon earth. His power extends over the consciences of his subjects as well as over their lives and liberties. As head of the Church he wields a moral despotism as great as his material power, and neither lords nor commons, press nor people, hold one rein that can check his course in any career it may please him to pursue. Only the knowledge of his mortality can curb his will; and were it not for the rude experiences of his predecessors, which must needs remind him of the fact, the sovereign of Russia might almost be excused for forgetting that he is but a man. These experiences, however, he is destined never to forget, for the spectres of assassinated emperors haunt the scenes of their former splendour to remind their successor that even czars can die.

The time has not long gone by when the Russian empire was held to be England's best ally and the Russian emperor her warmest friend. Of all the princes who flocked to England in 1812, when the great Buonaparte had at length been forced to succumb to the power of the Allies, none was so popular as the stalwart Nicholas, then only a lad of eighteen but already tall beyond his fellows, handsome and kingly in all his ways. For forty long years he retained his popularity and sealed by his personal influence the almost unbroken friendship that had subsisted between England and Russia for nearly three centuries. Even when his designs upon Turkey were patent to the entire world, England was loth to believe in the treachery of her trusted friend, and English statesmen ridiculed the idea that the whom frank and manly sovereign whose interest in this country showed itself in so many different ways had turned his back upon the past. Yet it

was so. The man whom England thought her best ally threw to the winds all the ties that friendly relations long fostered had created, and dared her to strike for right and honour.

But Britain struck home, and that with no uncertain blow: struck at first all unprepared and in great danger, yet with a dauntless courage that made light of hardship and a pertinacity that won success, until, at last, all in the torment of the situation he had created, the great Czar of Russias broke his heart and died—died by the traitorous hand of the winter king, whom he had looked on as his best general, at the very time when it was evident that the patience and fortitude of the English were overcoming the fatal attacks of that bitter weather whose aid he had relied upon. In the midst of her sorrow for her soldiers dead of cold and starvation in that miserable winter England had yet a feeling of regret left for her ancient friend, and met his son's overtures for peace in a kindly and appreciative spirit that should have led to lasting amity. Still, British confidence, once shaken, is not easily restored, and with all her respect for the liberal tendencies of the present Russian emperor, England has never ceased to watch his proceedings with jealous eyes. The result has unfortunately verified her distrust and proved the necessity for prompt and stern repression of all plans that tend to undo the work the allied armies did in the Crimean War. Yet it is impossible to look at the past life of Alexander the Second without feeling respect for his many noble qualities and regret that along with the power of his ancestors he has inherited their insatiate ambition.

Alexander Nicolaievitch was born on the 29th of April, 1818, at a time when his father was simply a Russian grand-duke, having no apparent chance of succeeding to the throne. He was carefully educated by his mother, Alexandra Feodorowna, sister of the King of Prussia, and by his first tutor, General Morder, a German Protestant. By his father he was trained in soldierly habits and martial exer-

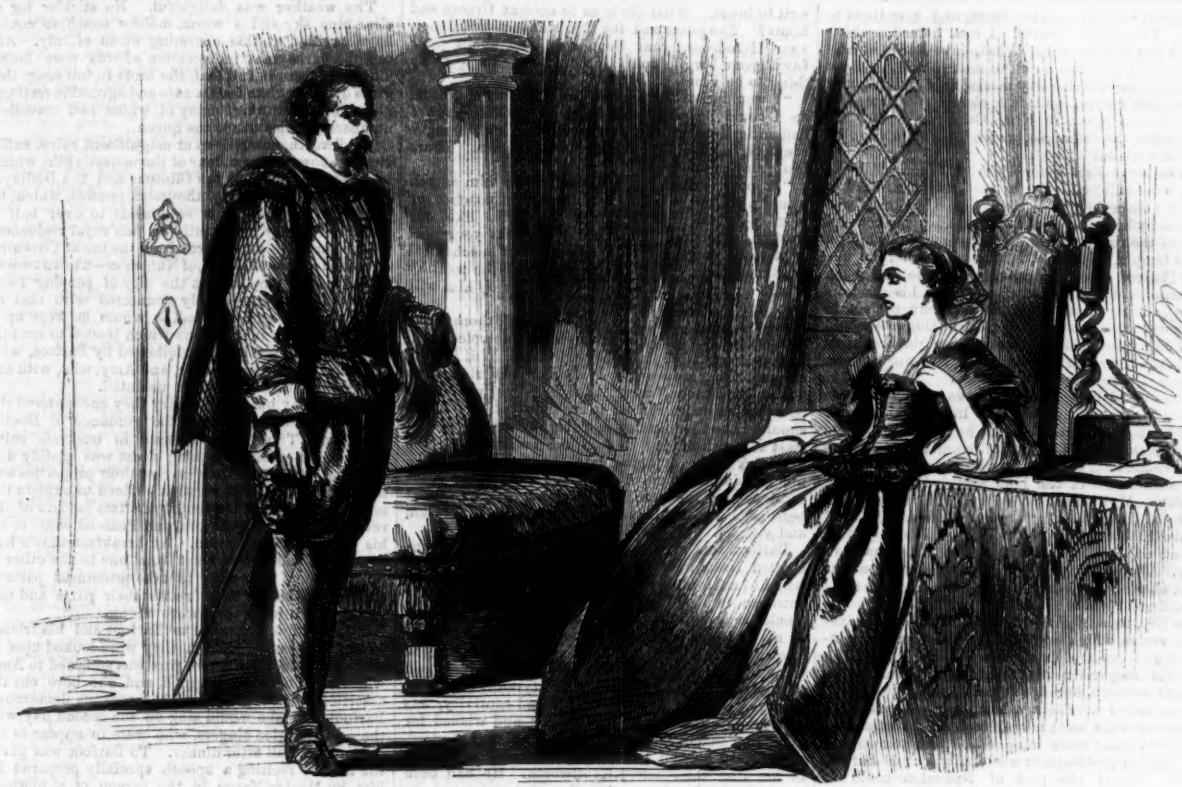
cises, and he had for the finishing of his education the assistance of a somewhat extraordinary preceptor for a prince, the famous Russian poet Joukowsky. In 1834, at the age of sixteen, he was considered to have attained his majority and was entrusted with high command in the army. As chief aide-de-camp to his father it was a part of his duty to conduct those splendid reviews in which Russian imperialism delights; and in this career he passed some years. It was not at all according to his taste, and, at last, falling ill, he was ordered off to travel for a year or two. He found health quickly enough and a wife into the bargain, for, being received with royal honours at all the petty courts of Germany, he saw, loved, and won the beautiful Princess Marie of Hesse Darmstadt, whose charms attracted him at a fete given in his honour.

From the time of his marriage, which took place on the 23rd of April, 1841, one day before his twenty-third birthday, until the day of his accession on the 2nd of March, 1855, he passed his days very quietly, occupying himself chiefly with the care of the military schools of the empire. In 1850 he undertook a journey through the Crimea, the Caucasus, and Circassia, in company with Prince Worontzoff, and gained much popularity in the places he visited. He was understood to be violently opposed to the war, and it was therefore easy for him to conclude a peace when the embarrassing heritage of the quarrel devolved upon him. It is not too much to say that all Europe hailed his succession to the throne with delight, as it was well known that certain administrative reforms long desired in Russia would be immediately undertaken. It must be acknowledged that public expectation was in no way disappointed. Alexander had seen with his own eyes in his travels the corruption that disgraced his functionaries, and his first decrees made short work of many of their opportunities of extortion. A large and liberal system of education was promulgated, the universities were set free from certain absurd restrictions imposed by Nicholas, and the supremacy of the military in civil affairs rigorously suppressed. This was the task of his first year of power. In his second he set himself to work to try and pacify Poland, and by a decree of the 27th of May, 1856, he allowed the exiles of 1830 to return to their country. But as he did not restore their confiscated property they were not very grateful, and Alexander found, as people always do find, that half-measures of justice do little to conciliate the wronged and defrauded. Being half a Prussian, however, he was not likely to part with any territory he had once got hold of, no matter how vilely it had been acquired, and so he intimated his intention to stick to Poland, and afterwards many of his conciliatory decrees concerning that country were withdrawn. This was but reasonable, because, having resolved to keep them in bondage, it was useless to do anything which might aid their resistance. Yet it is strange to see how thoroughly in his speeches he forgets that his possession of Poland and Finland is but the victory of might over right, and that he has no more title to either place than he has to the Constantinople he covets, or to the purse in an Englishman's pocket.

"After all," says he, "they will continue to nourish illusions of independence, while I am resolved to maintain them as they are. Poland and Finland are as valuable to me as the rest of my empire, and they shall always be subject to the Emperors of Russia. For myself, I love better to be kind than cruel, but while they wish to get back their independence and I to keep them—why, there is no alternative." Therefore, poor Poland has had a bad time under the kindly emperor, and by recent decree Poles are not permitted to acquire land in Poland, while special facilities are given the Russians for doing so. The very name of the kingdom has now been abolished, and the national language and costume have shared the same fate.

But while the dealing of Alexander with Poland have been more cruel and severe than those of any monarch in history with any former captive nation, he has proved himself a benevolent ruler to his own subjects. His name will be remembered throughout all time as that of a monarch who, in spite of the strenuous opposition of his counsellors and of the nobility, abolished the degrading condition of serfdom in which his people had for ages languished. By a decree of the 3rd of March, 1861, serfdom was finally abolished throughout the Russian empire, and the lasting gratitude of millions yet unborn must follow the name of him who gave them freedom.

The Emperor of Russia has had seven children. The eldest, a son, Nicholas, died at Nice in 1855, just after his betrothal to the Princess Dagmar, of Denmark, sister to the Princess of Wales. The young lady had, however, apparently set her heart upon being the future Empress of Russia, so she discreetly transferred her affections to the new heir to the throne, the emperor's second son, Alexander, to whom she was married shortly afterward.



[AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.]

AMY ROBSART.

BY BRACEBRIDGE HENRY.

Author of "Heart's Content," "Evander," &c., &c.

CHAPTER X

And durst thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?

The day drags through, though storms keep out
the sun.
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly
live on.

BEING within the precincts of a large town, neither Amy nor her protector was apprehensive of danger from the pursuit of Anthony Foster and Dick Whistler. They were of opinion that an appeal to the landlord of the inn where they were staying would suffice to protect them against any violence. It was only while travelling along a lonely and unprotected road that they dreaded an encounter, such as, by Barfoot's ingenuity, they had cleverly avoided. So it was determined that the night should be passed in Coventry, and that the next day they should press on to Kenilworth, where the queen was expected towards evening—this course being rendered all the more advisable owing to the weakness and general debility exhibited by the countess, whose strength was evidently not adequate long to support the fatigue she was compelled to put up with. A light refreshment having been procured for her, she retired, under the care of a buxom chamber-maid, to a comfortable chamber which had been prepared for her, and sleep, the only friend of the wretched and those who are anxious and troubled in mind, acted the part of tired nature's restorer, weighing down her heavy eyelids and casting her into a sound slumber.

When Jack Barfoot was assured that the countess required nothing further he disposed of a hearty supper and went into the room of the inn where the landlord and his customers were wont to pass the evening. There he was joined by the keeper of the bear, whose name was Will Rudge, between whom and Barfoot there speedily sprang up an intimacy and a liking, for there was in both just that one touch of nature which, the poet says, makes the whole world kin. They were Bohemians—they had to live by the sharpness of their wits; one was a showman, the other had been in that line, and there was a mystical something in their several conditions which resulted in good-fellowship.

Calling the drawer, Barfoot said:
"A cup of sack, and put a toast in it."

While Will Rudge exclaimed:
"Brew me a potle of the same stuff; and put no eggs in it, I'll have it similes of itself."

"I know not what you do here," continued Barfoot, when the drawer had complied with their several requests, "but I am on my way to Kenilworth, and if you are in the humour we can form a party, and perhaps turn our accidental meeting to account. Bruin is a mirth-provoking animal, and I'll be bound you have not found out the half of his tricks yet."

"In what capacity go you to the revels?" asked the showman, with a quiet twinkle in his eye, which denoted that though he was not loud-spoken, he was by no means deficient in sense, and that he had a shrewd suspicion of some hidden purpose in his new companion.

"The guile I shall take upon me is that of a conjuror," answered Barfoot, a little uneasily. "The girl you saw with me o'er now is my sister, who has a voice of music, and can sing with the voice of a nightingale."

"You ride on good cattle, and dice off the best for a stroller," said Will Rudge. "Well I wot that the earnings of my bear scarce get me a crust and a lodging. But, sooth, it matters little to me; I pry into woman's business? not I; though, my master, you recollect the old saying, 'Still swine eat all the draff.'"

"Come, you do me wrong; I am but a poor man. Shall we be friends? Drink the lucky hour, I say," answered Barfoot.

"There's my hand on it," said the showman, grasping his companion's brawny fist in token of amity; and the compact was ratified without any further controversy, though Rudge, by a sly smile, gave the other to understand that a man may be persuaded against his will and still hold the same opinion.

At this moment there was a slight commotion at the other end of the room, which was occasioned by the entry of a tall, thin man, attired decorously in black, as beffited a scholar or a man of science. His bearing was that of one who was well conceived with himself and somewhat puffed up with his own importance.

"Ha! Master Nason!—worthy Master Nason, of Nuneaton!" cried the landlord. "How fares it with thee, good sir?"

"Peace be with you, mine host," rejoined he who was addressed as Master Nason. "I do believe there is a knot, a pack, and a conspiracy against me, for here was I this good night to have met the learned Doctor Dugdale, with a large crowd of mummers from

all parts, going to the great show at Kenilworth. Here am I selected from all the townspeople in this shire for my knowledge of the poetic art to write and assign the speeches to the mummers, yet not one of them can I see to make perfect in their parts. There is fifteen lines for a Nereid floating on the lake, and twenty for a Triton; twelve for the rascally thick-headed boar, the porter at the gate, and many others which I have in my overstocked brain; such lines as Will of Stratford or Dan Chaucer either could not put together in a hurry, I warrant you. I am cozened, host, and shall be a gibe and a flouting-stock."

"I did hear that Doctor Dugdale was at Warwick, sir, and had been waiting there a day and night for the arrival of some learned poet. Can it be that you have missed your meeting-place?" remarked the host.

"If it should be so, truly I have none to blame for it but that same addle-pated knave, Peasod, my wooden-headed pupil of the Abbey Street, whom I sent with letters to the doctor. May I be paid for this my work in clip coin for sending such a Jack o' Bedlam. He has passed him on the road. By'r lady, the evil one has him, I think, in fee simple."

"Should the doctor and his troupe be lying at Warwick, Master Nason, you will meet him on the road to-morrow, and if this same Peasod has distributed the parts to the several performers, there will not be so much harm done after all," said Barfoot, in a polite tone.

"I thank you, sir, for the suggestion, which I find neither impudent nor intrusive, though I know you not, yet, being in a public room, and being also, as I may say, a public man, and of some mark out of my native town of Nuneaton, I will not be offended at your familiarity, but will drink to our better acquaintance. Though I have some smack of age about me, I keep my good wit, eh, host?"

"Marry, sir, I wish you may find lime in my sack if I do not think thee an honour to our shire. Oh! the verse he will write, the poetry he will make you! It should be put in a book and bound up in calf-hide, with gold letters on it," answered the landlord.

"A plague on this Peasod," continued the poet. "He has nothing more in his head than there is in a stewed prune. Never would he climb the classic Mount Parnassus. The muse will have none of him. If all my toil and trouble end in discomfiture I shall get no credit for my verses, and the queen will not hear them unless I be Triton, Nereid, Neptune, Mars, and Venus all in one, and say them myself, which would be a strange confusing of the sexes. A plague, I say, on Peasod! He should take his

worthless brains out, butter them, and give them to a dog. The lunatic knave! I was, indeed, seeking a fool when I found him. What, have I bought hold at eight shillings an ell to make shirts, and put on a seal ring worth forty marks to find favour in her majesty's eyes, and fate should play me this trick! I could speak in King Cambyses' vein. My anger is like the camomile, which grows the more by being trodden on."

It was some time before Master Nason, of Nuneaton, would allow his ire to cool, and it seemed to a shrewd observer like Barfoot that his vanity was flattered by being allowed to monopolise the conversation of the room. Some sack, however, put him in a good temper, and when, in an hour's time, the unlucky Peascod entered, declaring that he had been told to go to Warwick and there await his master's coming, adding that the mummers were perfect in their parts, and the reverend Doctor Dugdale would meet him on the road two hours after daybreak, all apprehension was set at rest, and the worthy man condescended to be genial.

"Now," said he, "shall we have such revels as befit the progress of a monarch like Elizabeth, and reflect honour upon such a noble as Leicester. This week at Kenilworth Castle shall be talked of in ages yet to come, and, perhaps, my poor name may come in for some share of the land awarded by admiring posterity. My verse halts not. It runs upon even feet. Peascod shall be my witness. Up, lad! You are to be a sort of Cupid, caparisoned with a bow and wings. Remember you the lines you have to say. They begin: 'Oh! gracious queen, whose visage, shining more dazzling than the noon-day sun. Go on, sirrah!'"

The boy, in a frightened voice, recited some execrable verses which were full of extravagant compliment and grossest flattery, in which her majesty's eyes, were compared to diamonds, her skin to alabaster, her teeth to ivory, her lips to coral, her hair to silk, her fame called everlasting, her kingdom invincible, and her court the most magnificent in Christendom; while her virtues were innumerable, her temper angelic, and her government wisdom itself; and Barfoot thought that if the poet of Nuneaton could do nothing better than what he had heard the queen would smile contemptuously, if she did not openly condemn, but he nevertheless applauded, having a purpose of his own in conciliating any one going to Kenilworth, fearing to be refused admittance had he not some creditable.

"Ha! 'tis a pretty speech and will serve its turn," remarked Nason, enraptured at the sound of his own words, which appeared to him flowing and melodious. "But I have others that far excel it."

"I would you could write one, good sir, for this man here. 'Tis a poor varletto who travelleth with me to the castle with a bear," said Barfoot, "I being, as it were, engaged as a juggler, while my sister, who has retired, worn out with the fatigue of our journey, is to discourse sweet music."

"It is a pity the bear cannot speak; the bear being the cognisance of the Dudleys. 'Twould seem well for a bear to support himself by a ragged staff and greet her majesty on her entrance," answered Master Nason.

"I will make bold to speak for him if you will give me the words, sir," observed Will Rudge, taking his cue from Barfoot. "I am of a quick study, and can commit to heart well. I have played Ghost in the play of Hamlet, writ by Will Shakespeare, and acted at the Globe in Southwark."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Nason, with some surprise. "They say great things of this same mad wit Shakespeare. I would fain see the Stratford lad, who stole Sir Thomas Lucy's deer, and then wrote a cruel, stinging satire which has well nigh driven the old knight mad since. I would not have had it writ of me for all the deer in Sir Thomas's park of Charlecote. But you shall have your lines, and I'll teach them to you with proper emphasis to-morrow."

"We should be proud, sir," continued Barfoot, "to travel in your train and that of worthy Doctor Dugdale, with his mummers, for, being all of a kidney, it becometh us to keep together. We are not like the smooth pates who wear nothing now but high shoes and bunches of keys at their girdles; yet we are not of the wicked for all that, neither are we illiterate linds, nor do we work by charms and spells; what we do we do openly. 'Tis a knack, an art, and we labour for the amusement of others."

"It is well said," rejoined Nason. "You shall be with me; you shall have entrance to the castle without paying a denier to the porter, for I have Master Richard Varney's letters authorising my admittance. I am styled in the same the Reverend Master Nason, the Poet of Nuneaton, and chief bard to the most noble the Earl of Leicester. Mark you that, sirs. Truly there are those who call poetry a vain and frivolous art. It is held in scorn by the Preciosians, but verily it shall excel, it shall last, as that which is

written in brass. What binds us to ancient Greece and Rome? The poets and the historians; your Homer, your Herodotus, your Sophocles, and again your Livy, your Virgil, your Horace. Oh! 'tis a noble thing to be a man of letters."

"I would give ten years of my life, Master Nason, as I could be you," said Barfoot. "Often have I had an inclination and a plaguey longing to make couplets, but I could never find the rhymes. Yours is a great position, sir."

"A poet is born; you cannot make him as you would a cobbler, a tailor, or builder of coaches, or even a vendor of creature comforts, like our worthy host here. Therefore I say that your poet is of more eminence than any of your mechanical handcraftsmen. Marry! the noble and the wealthy should encourage the men of letters, for by him will they live in song and story."

Master Nason looked around him, and, there being no dissentient voice, his triumph was complete, and he condescended to talk to Barfoot and Will Rudge, extemporising some verses in which "bear" rhymed to "hair," and "tear," and "dare." These were to be polished before he retired to rest, so that the keeper should have them in the morning, when they would start at break of day to join the mummers on the Warwick road. It being late, the party soon broke up, the simple people of Coventry shaking the Nuneaton poet by the hand, and regarding him as a great personage whose talents should command admiration and respect.

Barfoot was exceedingly glad that he had conciliated Nason, for he saw the difficulties vanish which had formerly stood in the way of gaining entrance to Kenilworth. He knew that Treddinian would be there with the Earl of Sussex, and felt sure of his protection as soon as he could make himself known to his patron. What Amy intended to do he could but guess, and his idea was that she purposed to appeal to Varney respecting the tyranny of Fester, or, being tired of her way of life and captivity, was of a mind to go back to her father, and wished for help from some influential person to do so. Indeed, he troubled himself little about what was to become of her after she reached Kenilworth. He had been sent to look after her, and render what assistance she might demand and he could yield. When that was accomplished his duty to his employer was done, and there was an end of it as far as he was concerned.

He little knew that the countess was going to her proud husband's castle, to claim the right which she undoubtedly had to be there, to receive England's haughty queen and her splendid following of nobility and gentry.

If she was poor, unknown, unrecognised, she was, in fact and in deed, Amy, Countess of Leicester, for she had stood side by side with the great earl at Heaven's altar, while a priest read the marriage service, and, being joined together in holy wedlock, no power on earth could put them asunder.

She had her rights and she meant to claim them, but not to the prejudice of her husband. To him she had made a promise that their secret union should not be divulged except by his express sanction, and it was not her purpose to proclaim her state publicly, but rather to seek a private interview with Dudley and throw herself on his mercy, his pity, to move him with her tears, to urge him with all those gentle and persuasive arts which so well become a pretty woman.

She would face the Dudley in his hall, not with threats and reproaches but with soft speeches and the tears of love.

CHAPTER XXI.

My soul, tho' feminine and weak,
Can image his: e'en as the lake,
Itself disturb'd by slightest stroke,
Reflects th' invulnerable rock.

THE 9th July, 1575, the day of Elizabeth's reception at Warwick and her entry into Kenilworth, was one long remembered in Warwickshire.

A large concourse of people had assembled along the line of route to witness the cavalcade, which in itself made a gorgeous pageant. The road near the castle was lined with yeomen of the guard, which in those days were what our household brigade is now. They were well mounted, and all fine, stalwart fellows, glittering in shining armour, valiantly holding their carbines, and keeping back the crowd with gentle pressure and judicious force.

Elizabeth lay the preceding night at Warwick Castle, not purposing to leave the town till noon, and the people would have grown tired and weary of waiting had not the earl ordered casks of ale to be broached and oxen roasted whole at various points, so that all who wished could feast to their hearts' content and have no reckoning to pay, which is always a point to be considered at a peasants' outing, the bill after a dinner in our time frequently spoiling the mirth of the day.

The weather was delightful. No stickler for a clear blue sky and a warm, mellow sunshine could have cavilled at this charming ninth of July. All the pleasures, that midsummer affords were here. The trees were in full leaf, the birds in full song, the grass dry enough to form a safe and agreeable resting-place for the throng, many of whom had travelled numbers of miles to see the queen.

Kenilworth, now a heap of magnificent ruins, sufficiently shows the grandeur of the majestic pile, which had been the home of the Clintons and the Dudleys.

Leicester spent sixty thousand pounds, which, in our present currency, is equivalent to over half a million of money, in beautifying this royal residence.

The party which set forth from the inn at Coventry consisted of Master Nason, of Nuneaton—a town twelve miles or thereabouts from the city of peeping Tom, whose fame is inseparably connected with that of Lady Godiva—and Peascod, to whom he kept up a constant fire of instructions which tended to muddle the few brains the lad had, followed by Barfoot, with Will Rudge leading his bear, and Amy, who, with her protector and the poet, were mounted.

A little way out of Coventry they encountered the troop of mummers, under the guidance of Doctor Dugdale. These were dressed in buckram suits, under which their masquing dress was plainly discernible. In a cart they carried their properties and scenery. A short conversation sufficed to explain the mistake which had prevented the two leaders of the revels from meeting before, and Peascod came in for his share of vituperation. At breakfast-time a halt was made, and Nason went from one to the other of the masques who were to take prominent parts in the revels, hearing them recite their parts and correcting them when they were wrong.

No objection was made to Barfoot and his friends joining the party; indeed, they were looked upon as an acquisition. No active part was assigned to Amy, who was said to be fatigued, and she bore out the assertion by her pallor and her nervous demeanour. Barfoot said she would sing on the second day with the part and glee singers who were to appear in the banqueting-hall after dinner. To Barfoot was given the task of reciting a speech specially prepared for him by Master Nason, in the person of a merman, who was to rise from some reeds at the side of the lake and apostrophise England's virgin queen. Will Rudge was to cause Braia to grasp a ragged staff, and when her majesty had passed the porter at the gallery tower and the band of warders, his keeper would bid Elizabeth welcome in the name of heraldry, the bear being intended to give effect to his pleasantries.

"Ye are all perfect," exclaimed Nason, when the morning meal was concluded. "Be true to yourselves, and do not muddle your pates with old ale until your work be done, and ye shall see a pageant truly acted. It shall be played in accordance with immemorial prescription. The poor world is near six thousand years old, but it hath seen nothing finer than what it shall see this day. Come, Peascod, thou bastard of Venus, once more shalt thou recite thy part. Come, trip it towards me like a true Cupid."

The boy had been making free with a pork pie, and seemed confused at this sudden summons. He got up, and approached his master and tutor with his head hanging down and cudgelling his brains to remember words that would not come.

"What, gravelled for lack of matter?" cried Master Nason, angrily. "Good faith, I'd as lief be without you. Now call me an old caroler for taking such a lad as thee to speak before the queen! An you stuff the stomach, the head will not work; when the beef's in, the wit's out."

"Nay, do not chide the lad," said Doctor Dugdale. "It may be he is perfect in his part, but being called on of a sudden the ideas will not come at the summons. Give him time, Master Nason."

"He is a boor," answered the poet. "I had my misgivings, but the dam of the evil one, his mother, would have me bring him. I selected him out of all my scholars, yea, I had a sore troubling of the heart aye, Peascod. Thy hair is the colour of Judas's, a dissembling brown. Thou wilt become a pickape or a horse-stealer. 'Tis thy doom, Peascod. Go to, thou art a tame snake."

Here one of the mummers whispered something in the lad's ear, which gave him the cue, and he started off merrily, never stopping until he came to the end, greatly to the poet's satisfaction.

"Heaven be with us! I cry the boy mercy!" exclaimed Master Nason. "'Twas the stage fright, the difficulty of beginning. Follow my horse, Peascod, and every five minutes repeat the first five lines aloud; dost hear?"

Peascod fell behind and the party put itself in motion. The poet and Doctor Dugdale, who had the proud position of master of the revels, came together and walked their horses in front of the others in token of their dignified offices.

"There will be gay doings, Master Nason," said the doctor, "gay doings anon. I call to mind the time when I footed it feinely. I am like a war horse that sniffls the battle afar off, as Master Oliver Mar-text would say."

"I, too, have trod a measure," answered the schoolmaster and poet. "Now with a quick foot shall the earth be struck, as Horace has it in the first book of *odes*."

"Heard you how the queen last night spoke to Master Bailiff at Warwick, and gave him a purse of gold? Oh, she is a gracious queen! Leicester, too, bears himself bravely. He has the king in his look, Master Nason."

"Ay, and they say he will have the power in His bands soon, for Elizabeth looks on him with an eye of favour, and it would not wonder me if she made with the noble earl."

"I wot not," said the doctor. "What will he—well, I cannot tell. There are strange events toward."

These words fell upon Amy's ears like ice upon her heart, for she was cold behindhand could not help hearing them. They confirmed her worst suspicions. She knew that the queen could not marry Leicester while she lived, but that there was something taking place, the mystery of which she could not fathom, she did not doubt, and to think that she was the victim of treachery or deceit on the part of Leicester made her heart grow sick and feel like lead in her bosom.

It was mid-day when the party reached Kenilworth, and they were not a moment too soon, for much had to be done before the queen's arrival. Dresses were to be arranged, positions taken up, the plan of the pageant verified on the spot, and a multitude of details to be gone through.

The crowd was very dense, and they were kept back from the gates of the entrance to the enclosure by warders armed with crabtree staves, who assisted the efforts of the recoubtable yeomen of the guard. This gate opened upon the Warwick road; the outer wall enclosed seven acres, between which and the castle was the lake, across which a bridge had been erected for Elizabeth to pass over. On the other side of the lake rose the stately pile of castellated buildings which formed the castle. Near the water was a pleasure or garden, ornamented with fountains and statuary. Beyond this was an extensive chase, filled with noble trees, whose spreading branches afforded a grateful shade to red deer, fallow deer, and a variety of game.

"Is this Moorfields?" said Will Rudge as the mob swayed about him and his bear; the latter being an object of great curiosity, while the leaders of the revellers spoke to the purveyor respecting the admittance they craved.

"The audience more resemble the Tribulation of Tower Hill, or the Limbo of Limehouse," replied Barfoot, with a smile. "I would as soon be among the horse-dealers of Smithfield."

"'Tis like a May-day morning," continued Rudge. "Ha, Bruin! Have a care there, Master Rustic. My bear is no respecter of persons, and were he to give you a proof of his affection I'll be your bail you would not want another. Back there, my masters! Ware the bear!"

"I would I had twenty stout truncheoneers, the hope of the Strand, or some Fleet Street apprentices to cry me 'Clubs.' They would clear the way of this idle scum," said Barfoot. "If this press continue I shall enter the castle, hose ungartered, bonnet unbanded, sleeves unbuttoned, shoes untied, all the world as if I was in love or had just 'scaped from a highwayman, and my doublet and hose are none of the worst either. They were bought in Eastcheap."

By this time the purveyor had opened the gate and the mummers were allowed to enter, which they did as quickly as circumstances would permit them, Doctor Dugdale standing on one side and Master Nason on the other, to winnow the corn from the chaff, and keep out any unlicensed intruders. Under their supervision our friends were passed into the enclosure, being nearly the last to enter. The gate was closed and the surging rabble outside had to wait until some new excitement relieved the monotony of their expectation.

Amy knew nothing of the historic interest which attached to the castle. She had never heard of Kenelph, the Saxon King of Mercia, who built the massive keep, or the Clistons, or Simon de Montfort, or of the siege of Kenilworth in the reign of the third Henry, or the revelry of Mortimer, or the imprisonment of Edward the Second in its dungeons, or its associations with John of Gaunt. She beheld its grandeur with a sort of awe, not unmixed with pride, for it was her castle. She was its lawful mistress; to her, rather than to Elizabeth, ought all the servants, grooms, and officers to bow down; hers should be the homage of the surging crowd.

And yet how was she entering Kenilworth? Un-

der the guidance of jugglers, mountebanks, showmen, and despised mummers, things of the hour, held to be nugatory by the respectable; to such as these she was indebted for her admission to Dudley's home; without their aid it is doubtful if she would have crept in at all.

The chase was traversed with a noisy mirth, for the mummers were glad that they were getting near to the castle, at the batture hatch of which they knew they were sure of an ample supply of provisions and good cheer.

Their excitement did not extend itself to Amy, to whom Barfoot was constant in his attention. She replied fully to his inquiries as to whether there was any wish of hers he could supply, but she did not enter into conversation with him or any one, being immersed in thought and perplexed with doubt.

Certain it was that her coming would be a great surprise to Leicester, who did not expect her. She repeated this fact to herself again and again, but she could not bring herself to think any harm of her coming, though she was not one of the invited guests. It was her right, and why should she scruple to exercise it? This mode of arguing should have reassured her, but it did not. Her heart continued full of misgiving, and she was weighed down by a load of melancholy which she could not throw off.

When the gallery tower was reached, a huge porter, armed with a club, was seen standing at the gate, and without his permission none could enter the castle. He was a very Gog or Magog for size, and suggested a judicious blending of Samson, Sir Guy of Warwick, Colbrand, and Bevis of Southampton, who fell so doughtily upon Ascapart.

His face lighted up directly he saw Master Nason, for he was a Nuneaton man, and knew him well. Moreover, the speech he had to recite on the queen's coming was of the poet's composing, and being muddle-headed he had not half got it by heart; so that Master Nason's arrival was a very godsend to him.

"Hail, fair sir, and all this goodly company!" he exclaimed as he threw wide open the gate. "Bid you welcome to Kenilworth!"

"I hope thou art an apt pupil, and will do me no discredit, Partridge," answered the poet. "Say thy speech, 'twill do as a rehearsal."

"Nay; I could not say it an you were to offer me a gallon of the best beer ever brewed in Warwickshire. I have lost the fifth line, sir. It begins—cogswood!—I know not how it begins; but, beshrew me, I think it ends with 'silence,'" rejoined the porter.

"That is what thou art likely to end in, friend," answered Nason; "though it cannot be 'silence'—'twould puzzle my poor brain to find a rhyme in the English language for 'silence.' No; 'tis 'peace,' and the ending of the first line of the couplet is 'cease.'

"Let wars and tumults now for ever cease,

For when Eliza comes, then cometh peace."

"Call you it to mind now?"

"That is it. How I have belaboured my poor brains—I shall never do it," said I. But pass in, sir—you and all your company—there will be rare mirth to-night," said Partridge, overwhelmed with joy at being put out of his perplexity.

Once inside the castle, the mummers put themselves under the immediate command of their leaders, and, taking possession of the tilt-yard, where feats of arms were to be performed for the delectation of the ladies, went through their several antics, and listened to the exhortations addressed to them.

Whispering to Will Rudge, Barfoot said:

"Keep with Master Nason; I will join thee anon. At present I must bestow this lady as befits her."

"Thy sister, said you not?" rejoined Rudge, with a smile.

"Thou shalt know all when I have time to speak with thee," rejoined Barfoot; "in the meanwhile hold thy own counsel. I have brought you here to make money—what more do you want?"

"I?—nothing. Go your ways," answered Will Rudge. "If you are asked for, I will account for your absence."

Mortimer's Tower was a short distance off, and, joining the countess, Barfoot rode—in silence, but with a beating heart—forward; their departure not being noticed by the mummers, or, if it were, they supposed that they went to stable their horses, Barfoot, by his acquaintance with Master Nason, and his riding on horseback, being looked upon as somewhat superior to the rest. He was accounted a juggler of repute.

The warders, dressed in rich liveries, grouped at the gate of this tower, did not question our travellers, who entered the great outward court of the castle, and saw all the towers of which it was composed before them. The appearance this princely abode presented was one of mirth and revelry. It was filled with guests and their retainers—people

hurried hither and thither; all was bustle and confusion.

In the middle of the yard Barfoot halted, and said to the countess:

"We can go no farther without addressing one of the attendants, madam. What is it your will I should do?"

"I scarcely know how to proceed," she answered, in evident perplexity. "Will you kindly address some one in authority and say my business is with the Earl of Leicester?"

"With the earl himself?" repeated Barfoot; "nay, madam, I fear you will have to wait, for his lordship is, from all accounts, at Warwick with the queen. Stay; I have it—leave it all to me!"

Dismounting from his horse, he beckoned to a gayly attired personage who was crossing the court, and advanced to meet him, saying:

"Your pardon, sir, for a moment. Here is a lady, nearly related to Richard Varney, the Earl of Leicester's master of the horse. She is a guest here, and would fain be bestowed somewhere."

"It is lucky you addressed yourself to me," answered the official, "for I am the groom of the chambers, and have had the allotting of the rooms, though I do not mind the name. Stay! what name was it you said? Varney, was it? There is Master Varney's own apartment. I know of none other."

Barfoot slipped a piece of money into his hand, thinking that gold might be more powerful than persuasion, and urged him to do his best for the lady, who was sinking with fatigue.

"Now I think on't," said the groom of the chambers, "there is a lodging prepared for some gentleman of the Earl of Sussex's suite in Mervyn's Tower, but I can bestow him elsewhere. If Mistress Varney—I think you said—will be good enough to follow me, I will conduct her to it."

"I am much beholden to you for your civility," answered Barfoot. "Rest assured it shall be reported in the proper quarter."

He went to Amy, who, though at a little distance from them, could hear a part of their conversation. Her face was flushed when he returned, and she said, almost angrily:

"What was that I heard? Did you describe me as Mistress Varney?"

"I knew not what to say, madam," rejoined Barfoot, abashed. "Master Varney is a person of some consequence here, and his name goes far. If I did wrong, I crave your pardon."

"It is enough!" exclaimed the countess, adding to herself: "Degradation can no farther go. This is how I enter my husband's castle! I am taken for the minion or the wife of Varney. Heaven help me! it is sad to fall so low."

"Will it please you, lady, to come to the apartment which is to be placed at your disposal?" asked Barfoot.

"Lead on," she answered.

The groom of the chambers espied the deputy usher, and, calling to him, instructed him where to conduct the countess, who, accompanied by Barfoot, followed to a compactly built tower, of no great height, the lower part being used as offices, leaving but one large room upstairs, which was destined to be her abiding-place. The horses were taken to the stables, and put with those of other visitors, being duly cared for.

"If I am well out of this scrape—by'r lady!" muttered Barfoot, "this shall be the last time I will play knight-errant to a damsel in distress. I fear me some evil will come of it yet. I am ill at ease. Better lead a bear than mix oneself up in intrigues which savour of mystery and danger."

CHAPTER XXII.

Variety's the very spice of life,

That gives it all its flavour.

PASSING by the great gateway and traversing the inner court of the castle, Mervyn's Tower had on one side a large building called King Henry's Lodging, on the other the keep or Caesar's Tower—though why it took the name of the great Roman conqueror it is not easy to say. The great hall was hard by, and the long ranges of kitchens were to the right; the apartment above looked out very agreeably on the pleasure-saunce, the fountains in which were in full play; the statues shone in the noonday sun, and the many flowers covered the ground as with a carpet.

The ascent was by a winding staircase of stone, which led into a vaulted chamber comfortably furnished as a bed and sitting room, the bed being in one corner, shrouded by curtains; on a table lay writing materials, which Amy eagerly glanced at, and when the deputy usher had left them together, after being thanked by Barfoot for his services, she bade her companion wait while she wrote a letter.

Some time elapsed while the countess was thus engaged, for it was with difficulty she could control her

thoughts and put them into seemly language on paper.

As may be supposed, the letter was to the Earl of Leicester, to whom she related her escape from Cumnor Hall, and the dread apprehension which had led her to take so desperate a step. She conjured him to come to her at once, and if he could not—for reasons which she on hearing them recognised—admit her as the mistress of his castle, she beseeched him to send her home to her father, Sir Hugh Robart, who was mourning for her as for one dead. She ended by assuring him of her unalterable love and affection, and declared that in coming to Kenilworth she had no wish to put him to any inconvenience, or distress him in any way whatever.

Some silken thread lay on the table, and, securing the missive, she gave it to Barfoot, saying :

"Friend, take this letter and give it into the hands of the Earl of Leicester at the earliest opportunity. See above all things that he has it before nightfall. All my hopes depend on this. I trust you as I would a brother. You have hitherto rendered me good service, and I hope that I shall ere long be in a position to reward you according to your deserts."

"Pardon my presumption, madam," answered Barfoot, "but would it not be wiser to seek out Master Tresillian, who—"

"Not a word to him!" cried Amy, hastily. "No, no. It is to Leicester alone that I can appeal."

"It is not for me to dictate to you, lady. I will obey your commission gladly," said Barfoot. "At least you will not object to my sending you such refreshment as I can obtain below at the buttery hatch. 'Tis long since you broke your fast, and your strength must stand in need of recruiting."

"As you will," rejoined Amy. "Bring me some trifles; I will keep up my spirits yet awhile. But do you execute my order. I repeat that more than you suspect depends upon your fidelity. Go—I can say no more."

Barfoot sought some refreshment, which he placed upon the table, and sauntered about the yard in much perplexity, doubtful whether he ought to obey Amy's commands, or whether he should not be better serving her by seeking out Tresillian as he had suggested, and telling him all that had happened from beginning to end.

In fact he scarcely knew what to make of Amy's behaviour; she had been strange in her manner, and he thought that perchance she might be some lunatic lady whom it was the earl's or Varney's policy to keep shut up at Cumnor Place under the watchful care of Anthony Foster.

The more he thought the more he feared, and he came to the conclusion that his wisest course was to keep the letter which Amy had given him for the Earl of Leicester, and wait until he could see Tresillian, who was his master, and by whom he might safely be guided.

To a man like Barfoot the Earl of Leicester seemed so high and mighty a personage, especially at that time, that to address him personally respecting some real or fancied injury was nothing less than an act of insanity.

His first care was to go to the buttery and there regale himself upon good ale and beef which was served out to him without stint; then he inquired where his quarters were to be, and was shown a loft over the stables, where he found many beds hastily arranged on the floor, and, taking leave to throw off his doublet and wash himself from the stains of travel at a sink in the passage, he discovered a comb, with which he made bold to arrange his hair, and descended, smart and clean, to the tilt-yard.

He took up a position in the base court, near Merton's Tower, where he commanded a view of the entrance to the castle, so that no one could escape him who came in from without, and he intended to loiter about there until he saw Tresillian, who he heard had that morning gone with the Earls of Sussex and Leicester to Warwick to receive her majesty, and escort her to Kenilworth.

Towards four o'clock a breathless post arrived, stating that the queen was not expected to reach the castle till twilight set in, owing to the press of business at Warwick which she had to go through, and those who had been in attendance for some hours, with all their senses upon the stretch, felt that they were able to take a little relaxation.

While he was thus engaged, Will Rudge made his appearance with the bear, who gave vent to a demonstration of pleasure at seeing his old master, licking his hands and making a peculiar noise.

"Why, Bruin, thou art the best of old friends," said Barfoot, stroking his shaggy head, and adding: "Well, how hast sped?"

"Oh, we have got through our rehearsal," answered Rudge, "and, for your part, you seem to have bestowed your sister."

"She will appear anon," rejoined Barfoot.

"What is the secret? The girl is no sister of

this. There is lady stamped upon her face. How camest thou to be her companion?"

"Thereby hangs the secret, Will," rejoined Barfoot. "Let thy imagination run not at my expense. I cannot now tell thee a long story, for the knowing of which thou wouldest not be one whit the wiser."

"As to that, I cannot tell until I hear it, but an you will not discover your purpose, I must o'er find it out for myself. He is a clever man who can keep a secret from me."

"You shall know all at my leisure. Do not press me now. Let me hear respecting the revels," replied Barfoot. "What part have I to perform?"

"That is best known to thyself. I am to be attired as a garter man-at-arms, and, with the bear, receive the queen in the tilt-yard. There is some foolery for me to speak, concocted by that concited poet of Nuneaton, which begins: 'Bear with me, gracious madame, whilst the bear, in the general welcome bears his share, an if he plays his best, I pray for bear thy censure, which will leave my credit bare.' I'd barely time to get this piece by heart. My fellow actor plays a bearish part."

"The queen will say, 'I'll bear no more,'" answered Barfoot, laughing, "for she will never have patience to listen to this nonsense of Master Nason's, unless she be in a better humour than report generally gives her credit for."

At this juncture Barfoot saw a gentleman ride into the courtyard, who was received by the attendants with great courtesy. It was Tresillian, who, as a follower of the Earl of Sussex, obtained decided recognition from Leicester's servants, they being instructed to be especially civil to all of Sussex's train.

Feeling sad and melancholy, his heart filled with thoughts of Amy Robart, he had quitted the presence chamber at Warwick Castle, while the high sheriff was addressing her majesty in laudatory terms, which, in their ceaseless repetition, would have been nauseating to any ears but those of Elizabeth.

Without a word of excuse to Will Rudge, who watched him curiously, Barfoot ran forward and assisted his master to alight.

Tresillian looked pleased at encountering him, and said, as a groom led away his horse:

"I have been anxiously expecting to see thee. What is thy news? Tell me here where we stand. My impatience will brook no delay."

"I have much to relate which will astonish you, sir," answered Barfoot; "and I think you will admit, when you have heard all, that I have served you well."

"To your tale, without all this prologue," cried Tresillian, impatiently, for he was burning with anxiety.

"Following your instructions," said Barfoot, "I went to Cumnor, and had an interview with the lady living at Anthony Foster's. Arousing her suspicions, I told her where to communicate with me should she require my services. She eventually sent for me, and she has escaped, not without difficulty and peril, but under my guidance—"

"Where is she now?" Tresillian asked.

"Here, sir—in this castle."

"Here! Did she come of her own free will? Here!" cried Tresillian. "I can scarce believe it; yet, remembering that Varney is in the Earl of Leicester's service, it is fair to presume that she has come after him. Conduct me to her."

"This way, sir," said Barfoot, crossing the tilt-yard and making for Mervyn's Tower.

"This is strange, indeed," muttered Tresillian. "Heaven give me strength and courage. How shall I meet her? I cannot leave her to her fate. My love for her is too great. I owe a duty also to her father. She must be saved from herself."

Stopping at the foot of the staircase, Barfoot said:

"In the chamber above I left the lady not an hour ago, sir."

"That will do. Go about your business," Tresillian answered.

"There is another matter, sir, which—"

"Let it keep. I can hear no more now," said Tresillian, ascending the stairs, burning with a feverish expectation.

"Now, a plague on it!" exclaimed Barfoot. "I should have mentioned the letter. It is proper he should know all about this missive to the Earl of Leicester. But I'll await his coming. What a coil and a heat he is in. Beeswax me, an I were well out of this business I'd not meddle again in such another."

It may be imagined that it was with a beating heart that Tresillian sought the presence of his lost love, whom he met again under such peculiar circumstances and in such a remarkable place.

Why she had come to Kenilworth he could not conjecture. As she had escaped from Cumnor under the guidance of his own man whom he had sent specially to protect her, she was not there by Varney's sanction or that of the earl, his master, so that it was

clear they had no intention of obeying the queen's commands, which were that they should produce her at the castle.

"Perhaps this is a lucky chance," he murmured as he stood on the threshold and knocked at the oaken panel of the door. "It may be that I can turn this apparent accident to the ruin and confusion of the Leicester faction. Oh! the villain, Varney, that so much loveliness and modesty should have been sacrificed to such a worthless knave!"

"Who knocks?" asked the clear, musical voice of the countess.

Without more ado, and fearing to be refused admittance if he answered the question, Tresillian pushed open the door and stood before Amy, whose eyes dilated with astonishment at beholding her former lover and still true friend.

(To be continued.)

THE DIAMOND MERCHANT.

CHAPTER XXV.

One act that from a thankful heart proceeds
Exceeds a thousand mercenary deeds. Cooper.

"Some one comes," said Sir Edred, on hearing the noise made by the revolving pillar. "I shall not strike yet."

So saying, he thrust the blanket back into the opening, retreated to the far end of his narrow dungeon, and placed his back against the wall so as to conceal his club.

The niche having revolved as usual, he beheld the two barons, and they came in such a way as told him they were veterans not to be surprised in the manner of which he and Aldort had been speaking.

Baron Senlis, who was in front, bore a great shield which would have warded off any sudden attack that might have been made by the unarmed diamond merchant. It was evident that the barons stood in fear of their captive.

Perceiving that he was far from them, and at the other end of the corridor-like dungeon, they stepped boldly from the niche and advanced a few paces, leaving a lamp burning in the niche at the feet of the stone image, while Baron Hermann bore another in his left hand.

From this circumstance Sir Edred judged that the night was quite advanced, or that dark passages had been traversed by the barons on the mysterious other side of the pillar.

Advancing towards the middle of the narrow prison, Baron Hermann tossed a scroll upon the floor, saying :

"You will find therein set down the terms upon which you may be set free. I leave this lamp with you that you may read them at your leisure. You shall receive no food or drink until you agree to accede to my demands."

"You tried starvation on him in the cell adjoining," said Sir Edred, still retaining his position at the end of the dungeon, "and, having failed, you ended by torturing him to death."

"We thought the evil one must have aided the fellow," replied the elder baron, with a grim smile; "but since we discovered you here we can understand how it was he suffered none of the pangs of starvation. These empty bottles and baskets explain the mystery. At command of Sir Fritz, no doubt, he laid in a good store of food and drink for you, and after he was imprisoned you kept him supplied from your store, which is not even yet all consumed. Is it not so?"

"Yes, it is so."

"You shall not be so fortunate," said Sir Hermann, and, pointing at the unconsumed provisions of the diamond merchant, he continued: "Put those out of the way, Senlis."

"In the niche?" asked Senlis.

"No; since, wherever we may bestow them without, they may be found by some rambling lier, and thus lead to inquiry. Drag that blanket away from that opening, which he says communicates with the dungeon of Aldort, and throw what provisions are left into it. Your friend, though dead, Sir Edred, shall have more than his share."

"Being dead, I doubt not he can yet speak eloquently to your nostrils," said Sir Edred. "Take care! 'Tis said the odour of the dead is most pestilential."

"Make what haste you can, Senlis," remarked Baron Hermann, and Sir Edred's remaining provisions were hurriedly thrown through the bars of the grating, Sir Edred being in great fear lest Aldort might imagine it was he who that pelted dried meat and mouldy bread through the opening, and reveal his existence by calling out.

But Aldort remained silent, and Sir Edred took care to cry out in a very loud voice, at the moment Senlis withdrew the blanket:

"Baron Hermann! Baron Hermann! would you starve me to death? I have never done you an injury!"

"Neither food nor drink shall you have," replied the baron, in his harshest tones, "until you agree to accept the terms set forth in the scroll. Never have I known the pangs of hunger and thirst fail to tame the most obdurate will. The fellow in yonder dungeon would never have endured his torture even to death had his frame been weakened by starvation. Pah! what a foul odour comes from him!" added the baron, whose imagination was deceiving him, just as we saw Sir Edred deceived when he thought a decaying corpse was near him.

"Come, Senlis, we can endure this no longer," continued Baron Hermann, retreating towards the niche.

"Ay, a most horrible smell," said Baron Senlis as he kicked over the only bottle of wine left after his raid upon the store of Sir Edred. "Let us depart."

"Study the scroll, Sir Edred," said Baron Hermann as he and his son stood in the niche. "We shall return for your answer to-morrow night—by which time you may be a little thirsty. Adieu!" and with mocking smiles and gestures the two barons departed.

Sir Edred then advanced and examined the scroll, the contents of which seemed to puzzle him. He read it several times, then went to the opening.

"Aldort!"

"Ay. They stayed not long," replied Aldort. "It was well that you cried out when the stoppage of the opening was removed, for I was on the point of betraying myself—though I see not that I could have added to my peril, being a doomed man."

"Hope while there is life, my friend. I have the terms they offer me."

"They will keep no pledge they may make. What terms do they offer?"

"First, food and drink in abundance of the best quality, and removal to a commodious apartment, with the treatment of a prisoner of high rank under mere restraint of an honoured captive—provided I give them an order upon my wife, or other competent person, for the payment of twenty thousand ducats. Then, this sum having been paid, they will see me safely conducted to Zweibrücken or Sparburg, as I may prefer, provided the additional sum of fifty thousand ducats in gold, or the value thereof in gems, be delivered to them."

"They are modest. They demand the ransom of a king. Could any man not a king pay so great a ransom?"

"A very great sum, yet Edred Van De Veer can pay more," replied the diamond merchant. "But the payment of the ransom, vast as it is, is not all they demand. I am to write and sign a declaration to this effect—that, knowing myself to be Prince Egbert Richard Van Altenburg, Grand Duke of Zurichbold, son of the late Prince Egbert, the father of him now called Prince Eustace of Zurichbold, I do, for certain considerations here set down, one of which is my rescue of life and liberty from the Riders of the forest, renounce and abdicate all my rights and claims, and those of my son, called Ernest, to the grand dukedom of Zurichbold, in favour of Hermann Van Arden, Baron of Zweibrücken, and his son Senlis, Baron of Karlwold. All this is a riddle to me, for I have no right or claim to be anything but Edred Van De Veer, son of Joam Van De Veer, who was a diamond merchant of Prague, and who is dead yonder in Turkey, or languishes there a prisoner—he having fallen into the hands of the Infidels when I was but a child. So what means this demanded renunciation of rights of which I know nothing?"

"Of that I know nothing," replied Aldort. "Perhaps you have rights of which you have never dreamed, but of which these barons are well informed. But it does not matter one way or the other. If you accede to their demands you will gain nothing, for they mean to end the matter by putting you to death. I am but a half-simpleton, yet I know that if you are, as the scroll intimates, Prince Egbert Richard of Zurichbold, they would never have made it known to you with any design to permit you to live to tell another of the fact."

"Was there ever a Prince Egbert Richard of Zurichbold?"

"In truth I have heard my mother say so," replied Aldort, "and that he was stolen in his infancy, by connivance of this same Baron Hermann, who bribed the infant's nurse to deliver the child to him, he having a bitter feud with the child's father, the late Prince Egbert—"

"Silence!" cried Sir Edred. "Some one comes. The pillar is revolving."

So saying, he sprang from the basket on which he was standing, and retreated as before to the far end of his prison.

The lamp left by the barons, being not far from the

pillar, threw a fair radiance into the niche as it revolved into view, and Sir Edred, who expected to behold Baron Hermann and his son Black Senlis, was surprised to see a stranger, of whose pale face and thin features he had no remembrance—a man tall and lean, clad in a ragged black garb, and holding a long-bladed knife in his hand.

"It is one sent to put me to death," thought Sir Edred, tightening his grasp upon his club. "He is armed only with a knife. He is alone. I am more than a match for any one man they can send to slay me, though I have but this club. But he does not leave the niche. He does not see me. The lamp is between me and him, and the light dazzles his eyes."

"Art in this dungeon, Sir Edred?" asked the stranger, in a guarded tone, and bending cautiously forward from the niche. "I am a friend."

"A friend!" replied Sir Edred, boldly. "Then you are welcome. Are you sent by Sir Fritz?"

"By Sir Fritz! No—and my curse attend him, wherever he may be," said the stranger as he stepped into the prison. "He bade his villains scourge me to death. Thou wert kind to me. I am Anselm Britzo. I had little hope to find thee, dead or alive, but I have not forgotten thy kindness."

"Ho! you are he—the false guide—the man I released from the tree!"

"The same, and ready to do what I can in return. But make no delay to leave this place. Come—instantly," replied Anselm, with impatient gestures.

Sir Edred sprang upon the basket.

"Aldort!"

"Ay! Is it Sir Fritz? I heard a voice."

"No; it is the guide, Anselm Britzo of Sparburg. He comes to free me."

"My faith! it may be his ghost, since I am sure we left him dead."

"It is he in the flesh, for with my own hands I cut the cords that bound him to the tree. Now tell me where I may send word of your peril to Sir Fritz, if he be yet alive."

"Who is he to whom you speak?" here asked Anselm, impatiently.

"I know him only by the name of Aldort. Wait a moment until he may tell me where I may find Sir Fritz."

"Ha! is it Aldort Bruno, of Zweibrücken?" exclaimed Anselm, while his eyes flashed with rage.

"Let me speak with him."

Sir Edred stood aside, and the guide took his place.

"Art there, Aldort Bruno?"

"Ay—left here as one dead, and the door of my dungeon is walled up. But I need hope for no aid of thine, since there is an old feud between us, and I laid the rod heavily on thee."

"True, and meant to leave me dead. But tell me where thy master may be found, for as yet the barons have not discovered him, and I will send or bear him word of thy peril."

"I am but a half-simpleton," replied Aldort, "yet I know thou art a liar, and were I to tell thee where Sir Fritz hides—if he be indeed living—thou wouldst betray him to Baron Hermann. So get thee gone, with my curse for ever."

"What says he?" demanded Sir Edred, who, standing apart, could not hear the words of Aldort.

"He is telling me where I may find Sir Fritz—if he be alive," replied the guide. "I pray you, Sir Edred, stand near the pillar, that our departure may be speedy."

Sir Edred complied, and Anselm again addressed Aldort.

"Aldort, thy master is dead, no doubt, or he would have found thee ere this. There is no hope for thee, and I rejoice it is so. Die, then, and remember the blows you rained upon Anselm Britzo, of Sparburg."

"I ask no mercy from thee," replied Aldort. "I see it is well I did not fall into the trap you set, that you might betray Sir Fritz. It shall be a consolation to me to remember how merrily I laid the staff on thee. Art going to stop up the opening on thy side?"

"Stop the opening!" repeated Anselm, in surprise.

"Why?"

"To lessen my chances for delivery, since I receive no air except from the dungeon thou art in," replied Aldort, who had a purpose in view.

"No favour shalt thou receive from me," said Anselm as he sprang to the blanket which lay near, and then back to the opening.

Then having stopped it securely, he hurried away to the pillar, and, grasping Sir Edred's arm, said:

"Come, we may be detected any instant. He has told me where we may find his master. Follow me!"

He sprang into the niche and half dragged Sir Edred after him. At the same moment the pillar began to revolve, and in an instant after the interior of the prison was shut from Sir Edred's view.

After revolving slowly for a moment the pillar be-

came motionless, but Sir Edred could see nothing, as he was in total darkness.

"Step as lightly as possible," whispered the guide, "and say nothing."

Sir Edred, yielding wholly to him whose grasp was on his arm, could only judge that they crossed a vacant apartment, then passed through a small passage, and began to descend a narrow and spiral staircase of stone.

This descent seemed interminable to Sir Edred, as it was made slowly, cautiously, and in darkness. At length they halted, and the guide whispered:

"We are now beneath a part of the fortress. You have been here before, for otherwise Sir Fritz, or whoever conducted you to the corridor dungeon, would have been seen leading you thither. It is now long after midnight, and we shall scarcely emerge where the light of day may be seen ere it will be broad day again. Say nothing. We shall have time for speech hereafter."

As they moved on, the hand of the guide still on Sir Edred's arm, the latter judged, and truly, that he was being led through the same passages along which Sir Fritz had conducted him three weeks before. After a time he was again forced to go on his hands and knees, so low and narrow were many of these subterranean ways.

This mode of progression was tedious and painful, especially as the guide, who was in advance, would sometimes say, in a guarded tone:

"We must return for a short distance. I have taken the wrong passage. I am not so familiar with the way through this labyrinth as I used to be. Patience. We shall be able to stand erect again presently."

It was broad daylight when they finally emerged into a grove of very dense growth, and the guide said:

"So! here we are above ground once more, Sir Edred, and in the forest, five miles distant from your late prison. I must leave you here, that I may procure horses, for without them we may chance to be long in making our way to the high road."

"Can you obtain any?"

"Oh, I have provided for that," replied the guide. "I had a hope that I might discover you in the place I did, and, knowing that if I did find you we should have need of horses, I left them last night where I may readily get them again."

"How was it that you had any suspicion as to where I might be found?"

"You may well ask that, Sir Edred, since you left me dead or dying, as you believed. Yet you must have discerned signs of life in me, or you would not have left the flask of wine and the dried meat for my use. I know not how long after your departure I lay like a dead man, but I do know that had you not left the wine and meat I should now be a dead man. I owed to you my life, and I wished to save it if I could. Having recovered some strength, I crawled to a cave not far from the Riders' Court, and there I lay concealed for a day, at the end of which time I was discovered by an old Rider named Hansel—whose abode I purpose going to-day. He was my debtor for sundry favours I did him in Sparburg, and he gave me refuge in his abode.

"I remained there a week, recovering as best I could from the terrible beating I had received, then I made my way to another part of the forest, where dwells another old friend of mine. From him I learned that you had been captured and slain by Sir Fritz—that it was so rumoured, yet not generally received as true; that the barons had seized the Riders' fortress called The Rock; that a great reward was offered by them for the discovery of Edred Van De Veer; that Sir Fritz was dead, or had fled from the forest. I conceived the thought that Sir Fritz might not have slain but imprisoned you. At least, I resolved to look into the only place where you could have escaped the search made for you by the barons. But I was then too weak to attempt the journey through the underground passages, so I dared not undertake it until last night. I did so then, and was nearly discovered by the barons, as they came from the prison shortly before I appeared to you."

"Then you were near?"

"I was in the spacious corridor of what is called the ruined wing of that portion of the fortress. I know not how they learned the secret of the concealed spring in the stone image."

"From words let fall by them," said Sir Edred, "I judge they discovered it by chance."

"It must have been chance, for it was known to but three persons—Sir Fritz, Aldort, and myself. When I entered your prison I knew not whether I was to find you or Sir Fritz, or some one else, for I understood nothing that I overheard the retreating barons say. But I will leave you here for a time, to see if my horses are where I left them at sunset yesterday. Be not alarmed if I return not until night, as I may see cause to lie low."

"I think it will be safer for us to move by night, my friend."

"Not many Riders are abroad," replied Anselm, "for the barons hold all of their party near the fortress, fearing an attack from Sir Fritz; and if he be not dead, he will not long permit the barons to rule over that which he calls his own. Yet I agree that it will be safer for us to set out for the old fort where lives Hansfelt after night has well set in."

"Is that man's abode far away?"

"If we start hence soon after dark, we should arrive at Hansfelt's before dawn of to-morrow. It is now two weeks since I was there, but he seldom is away from his home at night—or such used to be his habit."

"Whither are we to go from there?"

"To the abode of a fellow by name Randolph Schwartz—the 'Iron Hand' inn."

"The 'Iron Hand' inn!" exclaimed Sir Edred. "Trust not that knave nor his yellow-haired woman with sight of me. They owe me an old grudge, and know me well. Five years ago I was set upon by them, and did them some sharp injury in getting away from them. The night before Sir Fritz captured me I had angry speech with them too. So see to it that we go not near the 'Iron Hand' inn."

Sir Edred little dreamed that his beloved wife was at that moment upon a sick-bed in the 'Iron Hand' inn, and his brave Ernest under the jailership of Hansfelt, as our reader is aware.

"Since you fear the landlord of the 'Iron Hand' inn," said Anselm, "and for the reason you mention, we will avoid the inn after we leave Hansfelt's."

"Good! May I never see the inn again," cried Sir Edred. "That villain Schwartz, or his wife—or whatever to him she may be—of the yellow hair would delight in betraying me to the barons, to the Riders, or to the evil one!"

By this declaration of his mistrust did Sir Edred throw away a notable chance for being unexpectedly rounited to Lady Van De Veer.

"We can speak more advisedly of what course to take when I return," said Anselm as he drew from where he had hidden it the day before a small sack well filled with food and leather bottles of wine. "Let us eat, and after that I will look for my horses."

CHAPTER XXVI.

No place indeed should murder sanctuarise.
Revenge should have no bounds. —Hansfelt.

The guide did not remain to eat with Sir Edred, but having taken a portion of food from the sack, plunged into the forest and disappeared.

Hours passed on wearily and anxiously with Sir Edred, and when by the position of the sun he knew that the day was on the decline, and Anselm had not returned, he became fearful that the guide had been captured, or that some disabling accident had befallen him.

"If he return not soon after nightfall," thought Sir Edred, "I will begin my travel through the forest alone."

Fearing that some enemy might chance to visit the dense thicket which surrounded and concealed the entrance to the underground passages whence he had emerged, Sir Edred, soon after being left alone, had climbed a tree of thick foliage, and seated himself there.

From his perch he commanded a view of the ground below, and also the narrow entrance not far off. There he remained silent and motionless all day, awaiting the return of the guide.

The sun was going down when Sir Edred heard the cracking of a dried twig, as if a foot had trodden upon it.

"It is Anselm, at last," he thought. "Yet it will be well not to be hasty. I will await the signal."

The sound of footstep approaching through dried leaves and twigs continued, and Sir Edred flashed his glances downward through his leafy concealment, and soon saw a man come into view.

But this man was not Anselm the guide. He halted immediately beneath the tree in which Sir Edred was, and remained there for several minutes, evidently listening, as if on his guard.

"He may have been sent by the guide to find me," thought Sir Edred. But at that moment the man chance to look upward for an instant, and Sir Edred recognised the face of the missing chief of the defeated Riders, Sir Fritz.

But Sir Edred had no desire to reveal his presence to this man, although there had been much in the conduct of Sir Fritz that seemed friendly towards him. Sir Edred remembered, too, the declared hate of Anselm for Sir Fritz, and feared lest the former might return and find the latter there. They might both be friendly towards him, but he knew they had no love for each other. The conduct of the guide towards him was plainly from gratitude. The actions of Sir Fritz had evidently sprung from a de-

sire to make use of Sir Edred for the attainment of some greatly desired end.

Therefore, regarding him more as one to be avoided than as one who might aid him, Sir Edred remained as silent and motionless as the bark of the tree to which he clung.

The delay of Sir Fritz beneath the tree was not long. He soon seemed to be satisfied that no one was near, and Sir Edred saw him glide like a shadow into the entrance of the labyrinth.

"He is on his way to my late prison," thought Sir Edred, "or he is about to take vengeance upon the barons. Surely he cannot believe that I am still alive. Yet I remember that Aldort told me Sir Fritz to the last must have believed him guarding me. It was by the orders or consent of Sir Fritz, too, that my dungeon was stored with food and drink. No matter; I am, so far, well out of the lair of the thives, and care not how they may end their affairs."

Scarcely a quarter of an hour had passed after the disappearance of Sir Fritz when Anselm appeared, after giving a signal that had been agreed upon.

Sir Edred glided to the ground instantly, and, grasping Anselm's arm, whispered:

"Let us begone at once. Not half an hour since a man was here."

"Ha! which way went he?"

"Thither! Into the hole in the rocks. It was Sir Fritz."

"Sir Fritz! Then let us begone," said Anselm, upon whom a trembling suddenly seized. "He may return at any instant! He may have friends not far off! Come, cling to me, for we have to go afoot for some distance."

No more was said, nor could be said, unless they had used a very loud tone, for the haste of the guide was almost headlong through the dense thicket. Arriving at the edge of a ravine, Anselm sprang down to its rocky bottom, and continued his flight at full speed for nearly a mile, when, leaving the ravine, he struck off to a spot where were two horses tied to a tree.

"Mount the other, Sir Edred," he said to the diamond merchant, who had followed him closely. "I will use this horse. After I left you this morning I saw many signs of the recent presence of Riders, and I judged it best to make our journey by night."

"Whither are we to hold our flight?"

"To the old fort, in which dwells the man Hansfelt, of whom I spoke. We may chance to obtain fresh horses there, though that is uncertain. Hansfelt used to be the farrier and horse-doctor of the Riders, and often had several good animals in his keeping. He told me when I saw him last—a few days ago—that he had given up that business, so our chance for fresh horses is small; yet he, being a friend to me, may aid us. But take care not to let him suspect that you are the diamond merchant; for he would betray you. Leave all to me, and I may manage him. But say no more now, for since Sir Fritz is abroad we must move like shadows. I have been proclaimed a traitor to the Riders, and my life will be taken if I fall into the hands of either party."

The guide then spurred on at a rapid pace, followed by Sir Edred. After rapid riding until long after midnight, they emerged from a forest path into that great field in which was situated the fortress-like abode of Hansfelt, and the guide exclaimed:

"As I live, the place appears to be on fire!"

"At least it seems brilliantly illuminated within."

"Nay, it is on fire in the part old Hansfelt uses as his kitchen! He dwells alone, and has no companion except a wolf he has tamed. Spur on, that we may aid him, if need be."

"He is naught to me," replied Sir Edred, drawing rein. "The fire may attract attention hither, even if there be no Riders near yonder burning house."

"Fear nothing, for the man dwells alone, and, having the reputation of one that is in league with the evil one, his place is ever avoided. We will but dash near and away again, if we chance not to see him. Besides, he may have horses in his stable, and ours are nearly spent."

So saying, the guide spurred across the field, and Sir Edred, whose only chance of escape from the forest in the presence of this man, followed him.

It was as they spurred thus that they were seen from a distance by Rudolph Schwartz and Ernest, as was related in a former chapter, when Schwartz began his journey back to the 'Iron Hand' inn.

But Schwartz and Ernest were not seen by Sir Edred and his guide, the innkeeper and the lad being hidden in the shade of the forest when the diamond merchant and Anselm spurred across the field in the glare of the blazing house.

By the time they arrived near the old wooden fortress all the lower part of it was a furnace of flame. The timbers of which it was composed were many years old, dry and searced, and all approach to the upper storey, and all escape from it was totally cut off.

But as the guide and Sir Edred reined up before the place as near as the heat of the flames would permit, the head and shoulders of a man appeared at one of the windows, his hands and arms hanging out in a helpless way.

"Ha! Are you there, Hansfelt?" cried the guide, recognising the face of the miserable man in the glare of the flames, which had not yet reached him. "Help! Yes, I am Hansfelt!" roared the man, in a voice made shrill by his terror.

"Leap out! leap out!" cried the guide. "We can give you no aid! All the lower part is in flames. Leap out, man. The fall will not harm you! Leap! I have seen you leap from that window a score of times. Leap!"

"I cannot!" howled Hansfelt, in a voice hoarse and terrible in his despair. "I am stabbed! I am bleeding to death! I cannot even topple myself from this window."

"Where may I find a ladder? I saw one here the other day."

"The ladder is here in this room. I cannot move towards it. It leads to the turret above."

"Then you are a doomed man, Hansfelt, for we can approach no nearer," shouted back the guide.

"Avenge me then, Anselm! Avenge me!" screamed Hansfelt as he hung half out of the window, struggling in vain to thrust his body over the sill, that he might fall below. "Avenge me upon Rudolph Schwartz of the 'Iron Hand' inn! He stabbed me in earnest in a fight that was to be shammed to deceive the boy he called Ernest, whom I held prisoner here—stabbed and robbed me!"

Hearing the words, "The boy he called Ernest," Sir Edred shouted back:

"How say you? You have a boy a prisoner; a boy called Ernest?"

"I had; but he has just been enticed or carried away by Schwartz—"

Here Hansfelt made a desperate struggle, and shot himself over the window-sill.

The distance thence to the ground was not greater than fifteen feet, and it chanced that immediately under the window was a projecting beam, by which Hansfelt's fall was somewhat broken; so that his collision with the earth was not so great as to kill him outright.

Yet the heat of the fire, which now had possession of all the lower part of the old fortress, would have stifled and roasted him in a few moments had not Sir Edred spring from his horse, darted into the fierce heat, and dragged the man beyond its range.

"Man!" cried Sir Edred, in an agony of alarm, "tell me of the boy Ernest. Was he one of the forest?"

"Water! water!" groaned Hansfelt, pitifully, thrusting out his parched tongue.

With eager haste Sir Edred gave him drink from one of the leather bottles provided by the guide. Hansfelt drank as a man who expects to drink no more, and gasped:

"The lad was a stranger to me—I only know that Schwartz called him Ernest. I am a dead man! Oh—avenge me on Rudolph Schwartz; he stabbed me—he robbed me. Curse him!"

"Speak of the boy. How long held you him a prisoner? Is there no one else in the place?" shouted Sir Edred.

"No. The boy—a handsome, brave lad. Ah; I am a dead man, Anselm! It's all up with me at last! The boy—he had black eyes."

"Ha! go on!"

"Black hair—and was, say, eight or ten years old. Schwartz brought him to me a few days ago—all a mystery to me."

"Oh, Heaven! I fear he was my son!" groaned Sir Edred.

"Your son!" repeated Hansfelt. "I know not his name, except that he of the 'Iron Hand' inn called him Ernest—and in his sleep the lad muttered something of his mother. Now I remember, as he slept his bosom was bare, and I saw upon it a mark, or a mole—which, if you are his father, you may know—in shape of a man's hand, and as red as scarlet."

"My son! 'Twas my brave Ernest!" exclaimed Sir Edred, his heart and mind filled with dismay. "So he has not escaped from the forest!—My wife! where is she? Tell me, man; said the boy aught of his mother?"

"I know naught, except that I heard him mutter in his sleep; and from that I judged his mother was ill—very ill—at the 'Iron Hand' inn. But Heaven pardon my sins! I am—a—avenge me!" and with a great groan Hansfelt died.

"He is dead," said Anselm. "Mount, and let us be off. Louger stay here is full of danger. There are no horses in the stable, and we must content ourselves with these."

"Oh, that this miserable man had lived to tell me more!" exclaimed Sir Edred, standing irresolutely over the dead body.

"Mount, Sir Edred, for longer delay will be dangerous," urged the guide. "Since you fear recognition from him of the 'Iron Hand' inn, we must try another direction."

"Not so," cried Sir Edred as he sprang upon his horse. "My boy is in the power of Rudolph Schwartz—perhaps my wife also. Conduct me, therefore, to the 'Iron Hand' inn. How far away is it? By what time may we arrive there?"

The guide, however, made no immediate reply, for he was eager to ride beyond the great space lighted up by the glare of the flames, so spurred on in silence until they had reached the darkness of the forest.

There he halted, and gazed back over the field. The old fortress was now a mass of flame, the turret on its top burning brilliantly like a beacon.

"It will be seen from afar," said the guide, "and I doubt not that many curious eyes may be eager to learn its cause. So old Hansfelt is gone, and by the hand of Rudolph. They used to be cronies, and it is a marvel to me why they quarrelled. Their habits were much alike, too, for they lived apart from their fellows—except that Rudolph has his wife with him."

"As horrid an old woman as ever lived," remarked Sir Edred, "and I fear my poor wife, if she be not dead, is in her power. Come, let us no longer here."

"With fresh horses, at a steady, swift pace," said the guide reflectively, "we might reach the 'Iron Hand' inn before noon, by a way I know of; but as our horses are well beat, we may not arrive there before it is night again, Sir Edred. From what little was said by Hansfelt, I judge Rudolph and the lad are not far before us."

"Then, in Heaven's name, let us ride on and overtake them!" exclaimed Sir Edred, whose heart was all a-flame.

"I doubt not he is well mounted," replied Anselm, deliberately, "for as we crossed the field in the glare I noticed the mark of fresh hoof-prints of two animals that must have been urged at full speed, and striding well. After such work, too, he will make no delay in leaving this place far behind. So we need not hope to overtake him ere he reaches his home. We are weaponless, too, except that I have a knife, and Rudolph ever goes well armed when he rides. He is a tough fellow to handle, too. His wife is equal to any man in strength, and knows well how to use sword, bow, lance, and dagger. It may be, too, that there are others of the Riders at the 'Iron Hand' inn, though the place is in no good repute, even here in the forest. There are dark stories afloat that Rudolph would not hesitate to make away with the life of any Rider for gain, so the place is shunned, and the man and woman also."

"And in their fiendish hands my poor Louise may be at this moment," said Sir Edred, with a shudder. "But what do you propose to do?"

"I will do all I can to serve you, Sir Edred, even to dying for you," replied the guide, heartily. "You were merciful to me, even when you had learned that I had betrayed your lady into the hands of the Riders. You even shared your food and wine with me when your own life was in great danger. You saved my life, and it is yours. I hate these men, who are now all my enemies. So trust me."

"My faith, I do—" "Then we will not at once push for the 'Iron Hand' inn, but find some safe spot where we may give rest to our horses, and, after that, ride so as to reach the inn by the time night comes on again. I judge that after Lady Van De Veer was set free by the order of Sir Fritz—and why he did so is a great marvel to me—she and the lad strayed from the high road, and wandering into the old road arrived at the inn to fall into the hands of Schwartz and his wife. Perhaps they were in the house at the very time you had words with the man before the inn."

"Great Heaven! could I have been so near thee, Louise, and my heart not have cried out?" exclaimed Sir Edred.

"It may have been," continued Anselm, gravely. "But if we are to rescue Lady Van De Veer and the lad, we must surprise Schwartz and his wife. I doubt not I may beat her down, while you attend to Rudolph; but we must have weapons. She is a very tigress, and he a tiger, in a fight. The fellow wears a curass too under his jerkin. He may have friends there at the inn too."

"I care not if he have a score, so that I be well armed," said Sir Edred. "But where may we obtain weapons?"

"There is a chance for that—a bare chance," replied the guide. "Not ten miles hence used to dwell a smith, a kind of armourer, who used to repair the battered arms and armour of the Riders. His smithy, and his abode too, is a cavern, the entrance well secured with a stout door, iron-phated. He used to live there with his brother, but at the great battle at the Rock I have heard his brother was slain. So if Traupmann still carries on his trade, he

may be there in his smithy alone. By good riding, we may reach the smithy ere daylight. So let us move on, for without weapons we can do little."

They rode on through the forest, the guide taking routes well known to him, and seldom used by those who frequented the woods, so that it was still dark when he suddenly halted, saying:

"We are not far from the smithy. Remain here in your saddle, while I, afoot, creep nearer to reconnoitre the place. Hear you nothing?"

"Ay. I hear a distant clink-clink, like the sound of a hammer beating iron on an anvil," replied Sir Edred. "It seems far away."

"He or some one is at work in the cavern, and the sound seems to come from afar," said Anselm as he glided from his saddle. "But we are not three hundred yards from him who is at work. Sit not from this spot until I return."

So saying, in a guarded tone, the guide placed the bridle of his horse in Sir Edred's hand and vanished.

(To be continued.)

THE EARL OF DALHOUSIE HAS LAID THE FOUNDATION STONE OF A NEW MASONIC HALL IN EDINBURGH.

We understand that at last guns are being placed on certain of our coast fortifications, two old 63-pounders having been sent from the Gun Wharf, at Portsmouth, to replace the ancient armament in the Freshwater Redoubt, Isle of Wight. A similar amount of energy is being displayed in the modern fortifications at Portsdown Hill, and other places on the coast.

CHEAP SHERRY.—"Hamburg Sherry" has now become such a well-known byword that every now and then we have the leading wine circulars congratulating the public on Messrs. So and So having just cleared so many thousand gallons of the stuff. This "Sherry" is quite a recognised article of commerce in the trade, and some of the advertisers even unblushingly sell it to the public under its own name.—*Food Journal.*

THE Japanese Government are likely to open the Island of Yesso to foreign trade. This island, like Saghalien, is already considered half Russian, and it must be remembered that in 1863 Sir Harry Parkes, our Minister in Japan, sent Her Majesty's ship "Rattler" on a visit there, with Mr. Adams, the Secretary of Legation, on board. In the attempt the ship was lost. It is a wily move on the part of the Japanese to keep the Russians from entirely monopolising the place.

SNAILS.—It is well known that a large species of snail, rare in Britain, and found only in the south of England, where it was probably introduced from the Continent, is a favourite delicacy in Italy, Austria, and other countries of Europe. The glass-workers of Newcastle also have their snail-feast once a year, gathering the snails of the neighbourhood, which are certainly not of this species, but such as abound in all parts of Britain.

THE CAPE DIAMONDS.—A correspondent at the Cape writes as follows from the diamond fields:—"A great lawsuit is being tried before the diggers' committee, in which Mr. Myers is the plaintiff. It appears that a certain diamond of 20½ carats, an old stinger, which has been seen on the Parade at Capetown, where it is said, 20° was offered for it and refused, has again made its appearance at the diggings, and having been re-found, was sold to Mr. Myers for a large sum, report says for 600/-, the seller stating that it had been found on the same day. Mr. Myers finding that he, as well as the diamond, had been sold, brought the case before the committee, with what result still remains to be seen. In spite of the recent enormous finds, hundreds of diggers are despairing of success, and wish themselves safe at home."

After the fighting at Bretoncelles, near the battle-field two French boys were found in the uniform of the French marine, crying bitterly. One was 15 and the other 16. They had come with 800 men direct from Cherbourg, had arrived at six that morning, had found themselves under fire at ten, and, as one of them pitiously remarked, "I was made a soldier against my will; I was brought here against my will; I was made to go into the battle against my will, and I was taken prisoner against my will; the only thing I have not done against my will was to burn a cartouche; then, look at my cartouche-box and count the cartridges; there they are all, eighty-four; and look at my gun, I have never in my life fired a shot at an enemy." He added that nearly all his comrades were boys like himself.

GRAND MASONIC FESTIVAL OF THE LODGE OF HENGIST.—The celebration of the 100th anniversary of this lodge took place on Wednesday, the 23rd ult., and was the subject of much jollity amongst the members of the craft. It was exactly 100 years ago that day that the first lodge was held, when a warrant was granted to Henry Dagg, Thomas Jeans, and another, to hold such lodge at the New Inn, Christchurch. On this occasion the lodge was held

at the Belle Vue Assembly Rooms, Southampton, under the presidency of Mr. W. W. Beach, M.P., the Provincial Grand Master for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, supported by ten other provincial grand officers, and a large number of the brethren of the Masonic order. The lodge was opened at half-past one by the P.G. Master, assisted by the officers, and after the warrant had been read by the secretary, Bro. —Atkinson delivered an able address on the progress of Freemasonry. The history of the lodge to the present time was then read by the Rev. P. H. Newnham, and also the real history of Freemasonry.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF GERMANY.

We will endeavour to indicate the career of an intelligent village lad who, having, at the age of fourteen, completed his school course, resolves to become a schoolmaster.

If in Saxony or Silesia, he enters a training-school called *Proseminar*, because preparatory to the seminary or normal school; if in Prussia, he enters the house of a private tutor, probably the local schoolmaster or clergyman. At the age of eighteen he proceeds to the seminary, where he has to spend three years; the first and second to be devoted, according to an elaborate scheme, to all the subjects he will hereafter have to teach; the third to be spent in teaching, under the supervision of the director of the seminary, in the "practising school," which is simply the nearest primary school. While in the seminary he is subjected to stringent discipline. He makes his own bed, and cleans his own room; he pays for his board and lodging—the former being of a very homely description, and valued at eightpence or ninepence a day—and provides his own bread.

At the end of the third year he presents himself for his first examination, which is conducted by the authorities of the college, under the superintendence of the school councillor. This examination embraces religion, language, arithmetic, writing, drawing, and singing, and is partly oral and partly on paper. The performances of the candidates are estimated with great precision, and a certificate is given to all who acquit themselves satisfactorily. The teacher is now taken charge of by the departmental councillor, who appoints him to a vacancy in his district. He holds, however, only the position and title of provisional teacher, the full status and rank of schoolmaster being withheld until he has passed a second examination, held three years after the first. This examination is rather an investigation into character and conduct than into attainments. When this last ordeal has been passed, the teacher takes the oaths of allegiance, and receives a definite appointment as master of a school.

It is evident, then, that in Prussia no pains are spared to fit the schoolmaster for his duties, and to drill him into perfect sympathy with the system with which he has to deal. He has, however, two grievances—the inadequacy of his salary, and his relations with the pastor. His remuneration is, theoretically, decided upon by the commune, which has to bear the expense of the primary schools, and which, therefore, has a strong motive to reduce the salary of the masters as much as possible. But in 1848 the complaints of the masters attracted the intervention of the central government, and, by a cabinet rescript of 1852, the various departmental authorities were directed to inquire into the salaries of all schoolmasters within their jurisdiction, and raise them, where necessary, to such an amount as they should consider sufficient. Subsequent legislation resulted in the fixing of a minimum of salary by the central power, the Bill of 1867 providing that teachers in towns of ten thousand inhabitants are to have a house rent free, and salaries of not less than from 30/- to 37. 10s. a year; in villages no maximum is mentioned, but the master must be supplied with fuel, provisions, and conveyances.

Notwithstanding the improvement in his condition, the schoolmaster's position lacks independence. Inside the school he is, as the State has laboured hard to teach him, the subordinate of the pastor, who frequently renders his inspection vexatious, with the view of magnifying his own office. Outside the school any concerted effort for the redress of grievances is prevented by the accustomed machinery of rescripts, minutes, and regulations. He may not—in Prussia, at least—become a member of any union or society, except the parochial and district conferences, and these he is directed to attend, but on the understanding that no criticism antagonistic to the management of the central or departmental governments will be allowed. He belongs to book society, but all the books in it are selected by the authorities, and the only periodicals allowed are feeble and one-sided local prints, in the columns of which all discussion is prohibited. The Prussian schoolmaster is, in fact, an incarnation of discipline, a revised code endowed with vitality. "He is," says Dr. Pattison, "hopelessly isolated in a kind of official world, and has no means of knowing what is really being thought or done without."

THE LONDON READER AND LIFE AND FASHION.

CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
FAULT ON BOTH SIDES	109	GEMS	191
SCIENCE	172	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES	191
HOW TO PHOTOGRAPH THE SUN	172	STATISTICS	191
THE GULF STREAM	172	MISCELLANEOUS	191
'THE LOST HEIRESS OF LATIMER'	173	HURRAH! FOR THE HOLLY. A CAROL FOR CHRISTMAS	192
HOW FIDO MADE HIS MASTERS' FORTUNE	176		
LADY IDNELL	177	LEIGHTON HALL, COMMENCED IN	360
ALEXANDER II., EMPEROR OF RUSSIA	180	THE DIAMOND MERCHANT, COMMENCED IN	366
AMY ROBBART	181	THE PEARLS OF ERIN, COMMENCED IN	367
THE DIAMOND MERCHANT	184	AMY ROBBART, COMMENCED IN	392
THE CAFE DIAMONDS	187	THE LOST HEIRESS OF LATIMER, COMMENCED IN	397
PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF GERMANY	187	FAULT ON BOTH SIDES, COMMENCED IN	398
FASHION PAGE	189		
LEIGHTON HALL	190		
FACTLET	191		
CHRISTMAS TIME	191		

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. H. J.—The handwriting is very good.
J. S. (Bromley).—The utility of soapsuds is unquestionable.

R. W.—Certainly. You can bequeath your share of the property to your wife.

GIARETTE.—Read aloud slowly and with precision as often as you can, and cultivate the habit of patience.

HENRI D.—A wash composed of saffron and ammonia is usually recommended for the object you desire to accomplish.

M. A. L. (West Bromwich).—We are obliged by your friendly letter, the contents of which will receive full consideration.

T. P. H. (Grantham).—We believe that the thickness of the "Great Eastern's" principal chain cable is eight inches, and that the circumference of the largest hawser manufactured is twelve inches.

LIVELY CAREY.—1. The handwriting is not good. 2. Velvet can be cleaned by rubbing turpentine on the spotted parts, after which the velvet should be held over a basin of boiling water, with the wrong side next to the water.

FONS.—There is no standard price. Talent and attractiveness always influence the buyer. His judgment is conclusive. In fact "the value of the thing is as much as it will bring." London is the best mart, and between St. Paul's Churchyard and Charing Cross many dealers are to be found.

ESTELLE.—The lines are pretty and touching. If they did not cost you too great an effort we think you should try again. Suffer just a hint. If for the last word of the third line of the first verse you had substituted the word "rising" changing at the same time the first three words of the next line for the words "Far o'er," some improvement would have been effected.

A. GROCER.—1. Spurling's Grammar and Dictionary of the Welsh Language will enable you to become acquainted with Welsh. The work is in two volumes, and is published by the author at Caernarvon. It commands as high a price as half a guinea. 2. Your handwriting is high enough. 3. The United States is the most suitable place for you if you decide to leave England.

O. C. S.—1. Goldfishes should be paired in the spring of the year, that is in March or April, according to the geniality of the season; choose bright, sunny weather. 2. You are premature with your young terriers. The rule is that they should not be pitted against rats until they have attained the age of ten or twelve months, and then they should be accompanied by an old terrier to show them the way and lead them on.

Z. Y.—You cannot do precisely what you wish, although you are not without a remedy against the present state of things. You can employ a broker to disclaim the rent due. If after the distraint has been effected your lodger refuses to go, you should apply to a magistrate, who has power to give you possession of the premises. You may purchase the articles of the broker in the event of your being the highest bidder.

MINNIE S.—1. You will find a difficulty in procuring the appointment you desire, unless you have some acquaintance immediately connected with the owners or captains of merchant vessels and steamships. A small premium would smooth the way. You might also advertise your wants in the daily journals. But you should exercise caution upon the receipt of any reply, which may reach you, and be well advised before you take a second step. 2. Your handwriting is perfectly suitable.

FEMALE SAILOR.—1. The accomplishments are not considered unladylike. To some men they would prove a great fascination. 2. Your choice should fall upon some brave, good man, and should be made with as much circumspection as it is in your power to command. For to you might be said emphatically, what is true of all, that your heart will break if you choose the wrong one. Never marry unless you feel absolutely to keep that troth which is pledged at the altar when you are required to declare that, forsaking all others, you will keep only unto him as long as ye both shall live.

EVERY INCH A SAILOR.—The treaty of 1856 was concluded in Paris at the close of the Crimean War, and provided, amongst other things, for the rectification of the frontiers between Turkey and Russia, the independence of the Danubian Principalities, the evacuation of certain territories by the parties recently at war, and for the neutralisation of the Black Sea, by which was meant that it should be unlawful for ships of war of any nation to cruise in the Black Sea. It is this latter article of the

treaty that Russia is now anxious should be modified, and upon this matter it is expected that an amicable arrangement will be come to between the European powers whose representatives are about to assemble in London.

ANXIOUS QUESTIONER.—The answer is very simple, and is: Take care not to get heated, and avoid a seat placed near the fire. The effect cannot be produced when the cause is removed, though why you should object to the healthy glow which is produced by exercise or other natural and proper causes is beyond our ken. You might carry a sachet provided with a mirror, a puff and some violet powder, to be used when you would assume your desired deadly whiteness, but it has been observed that young ladies who are ambitious in their attentions to the powder and puff seldom find husbands.

RAMBLER JACK.—There is a general registry office at Somerset House, London, where search may be made for either a birth, a marriage, or a death, for the fee of one shilling. The records, however, deposited there do not extend farther back than August, 1834, the date at which the great Registration Act was passed. Previous to this date the registers were parochial and still remain in the custody of the parishes. Your informant who told you to the contrary perhaps was under some misapprehension. In old times registration of birth was often evaded in order to escape the payment of a stamp duty than in force. It is just possible that the birth of your friend the old lady was never registered.

S. E. C. H.—The conduct is highly reprehensible; it is an additional misfortune that you cannot afford to treat it with the contempt it deserves. There has been much mismanagement in the affair, but it is too late to speak of that in detail. You are, however, entitled to name the hour which best suits your own convenience to give the receipt; it should be exchanged for the money without the slightest comment. If your appointed time be disregarded you should, at the end of a month, sue for the amount in the County Court. You can only now claim the smaller sum, as by your own act you have voluntarily relinquished the better claim. That was a very weak thing to do. Have you not some friend to speak for you, and thus prevent your receiving further injury from unscrupulous hands?

SHADOWS.

How very deep the shadows lie!
Around my heart to-night!
I have no hopes to cheer me now:
They vanished with the light.

How dark and drear the future seems!
How void of every joy!
Its light seems but a mockery,
Its blessings but a toy.
Cheer up, faint heart! for brighter days
Are yet in store for thee—
When flowers that look so withered now
Will bright and blooming be.

S.—Without doubt the election of the new School Boards is the commencement of a new and propitious era in the history of England. It is a great relief to believe that henceforth neglected children, children who scarcely know their parents, will be brought under a systematic supervision. We expect that the religious difficulty, notwithstanding all that has been said upon the subject, will practically vanish as the educational scheme becomes matured. In an age especially distinguished by the influence and freedom which attach to the press, it is impossible to suppose that any extreme views or any interference with the rights of conscience would be for a moment tolerated by the public. As equally difficult is it to believe that in these days any parent would designately withhold from a child the elements of any branch of knowledge that happens to be within its reach. The sentiment of devotion is strong in a mother's breast, and we can hardly believe that throughout the wide world there exists a mother who would refuse to have her child taught to say "Our Father," and who would reject the teaching which will explain to the little one what is meant by the sentence at the head of which stand the words just quoted. Women generally do not ignore this mother's feeling, and at the recent elections women have used their votes as well as their influence.

FORSUMMER, twenty-one, 5ft. 2in., dark hair and eyes, and loving.

T. B. H., twenty-eight, tall, dark, and handsome, with a good income. Respondent must be short, fair, fond of life, and not exceed twenty-five.

B. J., nineteen, 5ft. 4in., blue eyes, light complexion, and in the Civil Service. Respondent must be fair and of good family.

J. W., a tradesman, and holds a situation in a post-office. Respondent must be of medium height, pretty, good looking, and an English girl.

LIZZIE, twenty-three, medium height, nut-brown hair, bright blue eyes, and domesticated. Respondent must be steady and fond of home.

DARK EYES, 5ft. 3in., loring, pretty, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, good tempered, fond of home comforts, and a tradesman.

DICK, nineteen, 5ft. 9in., blue eyes, light hair, fond of music, and in the Navy. Respondent must be tall and good looking.

HAPPY JACK (a petty officer in the Navy), thirty, 5ft. 6in., dark, black whiskers and moustache, good tempered, and cheerful. Respondent must be good tempered.

B. DE B., 4ft. 7in., fair hair, blue eyes, and loving. Respondent must be rather short, loving, and have a little income.

WILD ROSE, twenty-one, middle height, dark, loving, and fond of home, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony.

A LINCOLNSHIRE LAD, twenty-one, 5ft. 9in., light complexion, fond of home, and loving. Respondent must be about nineteen, dark, fond of music and of her own fire-side.

NORA, eighteen, 5ft. 3in., dark hair, blue eyes, pretty, fond of home, domesticated, and will have money when

of age. Respondent must be of medium height, fair, about twenty-three, loving, fond of home, and have a good income.

MARIAN, good looking, dark brown hair, dark eyes, good tempered, fond of music, and is in a business of her own. Respondent must be tall, dark, gentlemanly, fond of amusement and music; a clerk preferred.

LEILA AND FLORENCE (Jewesses).—"Leila," nineteen, tall, fair, gray eyes, and auburn hair. "Florence," seventeen, short, dark brown eyes, and brown hair. Respondents must belong to the Jewish persuasion, and be able to keep a wife.

EVERY INCH A SAILOR, twenty-two, 5ft. 5in., in the Navy, has dark hair and whiskers, can play the piano, and has good prospects. Respondent must be about eighteen, good looking, fond of home and music, and loves a sailor from the bottom of her heart.

F. G. M., twenty-one, 5ft. 4in., brown hair and eyes, loving, fond of home, would make a good husband to a loving wife, and has an income of 300 per annum. Respondent must be about eighteen, tall, fair, and good looking.

SWORDIOR, tall, rather fair, well educated, accomplished, good looking, loving, faithful, and an heiress. Respondent must be dark, handsome, not over three-and-twenty, must have a good income, and be tall and well educated.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

MILLY is responded to by—"Harold," a clerk in a lawyer's office, good looking, tall, and fair.

ROSENBURG by—"R. H.," thirty-four, 5ft. 8in., and has an income and good expectations.

H. B. by—"Lottie," seventeen, medium height, fair hair, blue eyes, loving, and cheerful.

H. A. V. C. B. by—"Amelia E.," eighteen, 5ft., fair complexion, fair hair, blue eyes, cheerful, good tempered, and would make a good wife.

MARIAN by—"C. T. S.," twenty, 5ft. 5in., blue eyes, light hair, fair complexion, and has an income of 2500 per annum.

H. P. M. by—"Bill the Quarter Master," twenty-nine, 5ft. 9in., big black whiskers and moustache, good looking, most affectionate, and in the Navy.

LADY ROSE OF SUMMER by—"S. H.," thirty-nine, 5ft. 11in., good tempered, fond of home, and in business in the country.

TRUSTY BUNNY by—"Eliza," eighteen, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, loving, and fond of home comforts.

TILLY by—"Arthur," slight and tall, exceedingly fair, whiskers, slight moustache, and gentlemanly appearance; and—"Ernest," medium height, fair, and good looking.

J. N. B. and G. A. C. (both Scotsmen).—"J. N. B.," twenty-six, 6ft., dark, musical, and fond of home. "G. A. C." twenty-one, 5ft. 10in., dark, and good looking. Respondents must be good looking and fond of Scotsmen.

FLYING JIM DOWNHARD by—"S. M. W.," twenty-two, medium height, brown hair, light eyes, fond of home, and affectionate; and—"E. H.," nineteen, fair, good looking, fond of singing, and domesticated.

BLOOMER (Jewish maiden) by—"J. M.," 6ft., dark, fine black moustache, curly hair and whiskers, fond of dancing, and has 4000 a year; and—"Highland Fling," twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., fair, handsome, and a professional gentleman.

LIZZIE, ROSAMOND, and MANY EVELYN by—"James S.," twenty-five, medium height, dark, steady, industrious, and a mechanic with fair prospects; and—"Louise H.," twenty-three, medium height, dark, steady, and a good-tempered mechanic capable of keeping a good home.

W. C. F. P. by—"Annie," nineteen, fair, blue eyes, very loving, and domesticated—would like an appointment or letter;—"A. L.," twenty-three, brown hair, dark blue eyes, loving, and domesticated; and—"Madeline," twenty-six, good tempered, cheerful, would dearly like to have a home, and has a great preference for sailors.

LITTLE DWARF by—"Amy," seventeen, short, brown hair, fair, loving, and lively;—"Myra," seventeen, short, a brunette, loving, and with a good voice;—"Lizzie," fair, loving, good tempered, and fond of home; and—"Adelaide," nineteen, short, red hair, blue eyes, fair, industrious, and would make a good wife.

BERVING CHARLEY by—"Florence S.," eighteen, 5ft. 2in., dark brown hair, hazel eyes, good looking, domesticated, industrious, very loving, and with 100/- at her command; and—"Maggie H.," seventeen, medium height, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, fair complexion, industrious, loving, and fond of home.

CAST AWAY by—"Alice," a good singer, and is quite capable of making Cast Away's home happy;—"Minnie," twenty-one, medium height, dark, expressive brown eyes, good tempered, loving, fond of music, and capable of making a home happy; and—"Moss Rose," twenty-one, 5ft. 4in., bright hazel eyes, plenty of golden hair, very fair, a good pianist, has a fine soprano voice, is loving, lively, and would make a good wife.

NELLIE will forward her cards on receiving particulars of him who wishes for it.

EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL, Parts 1 to 4, Price Threepence each.

THE LONDON READER, Post-free Three-halfpence Weekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

* * * Now Ready, VOL. XV. of THE LONDON READER, Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. XV. Price One Penny.

NOTE.—Part 91, for DECEMBER, Now Ready, price 7d., containing Steel Plate Engravings, coloured by hand, of the latest Fashions, with large Supplement Sheet of the Fashions for December.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

* * * We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

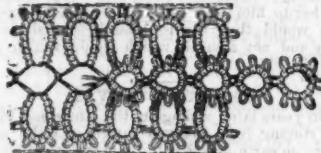
TATTING INSERTION.

LOW, BRAIDED BOOT, CHEMISSETTE, POINT
LACE, &c.

INSERTION IN TATTING.—No. 1.

ABBREVIATIONS.—Dbk double knot, p picot.

This insertion, of which the central scallops are shown in our illustration in a half finished state, is, when these scallops are completed, worked with the auxiliary thread. First the upper, then the under half is tatted thus: 3 dbk, 3 p, each divided by 1 dbk, 3 dbk, 1 p, and repeated from *.



TATTING INSERTION.—No. 1.

The work of the half consisting of the same number of dbk and p can only be looped on to the upper part, and the upper and under large picots must be looped on to the single p of the middle scallops. But in this looping-on a space must be left, as shown by the illustration of the working of the scallops.

The large outer scallops consist of 6 dbk, 1 p, 2 dbk, 3 p, each divided by 1 dbk, 2 dbk, 1 p, 3 dbk. At the second scallop and all the other scallops no looping takes place, but at the first.

This insertion is edged with a row of crochet work, with which, at a distance of 5 ch, 1 single stitch catches up the centre of each scallop.

BOW FOR THE HAIR.—No. 2.

This bow is made of sarsenet ribbon of two colours. It has three loops; from these depend folded pointed ends. The loops are edged with lace, and the ends are fringed.

GENTLEMAN'S FANCYWORK BOOTS.

No. 3.

THESE boots should be made of Corinthian brown cloth, worked in gold-coloured silk, with the aid of the sewing machine. The design might with equally good effect be produced by chain stitch, and in this case the employment of lines, run in coloured silk, over the cloth or leather—for leather may be used—would facilitate the design. Any pleasing colour, supposing Corinthian brown not attainable, would answer equally well.

When the fancywork is complete the boots must be made up at the shoemaker's. Supposing brown to be the colour chosen for them, the tassels and laces should be of brown and gold colour.

CHEMISSETTE WITH EMBROIDERY.—No. 4.

This chemisette is of mull muslin, richly em-



CHEMISSETTE.—No. 4.

brodered with an insertion added of Valenciennes lace. The lace is itself introduced by means of one row of lace stitch. The slope of the neck is edged with narrow Valenciennes; embroidery hides the joining on of the lace. A bow of mull muslin and Valenciennes is worn in front of this rich and tasteful collar.

CROCHET FICHU.

THIS fichu is very simple in its execution; it is worked in crochet ecossais with purple or any other coloured wool; it is trimmed with an edging in black wool, which goes entirely round the fichu and the neck, down the sides of the sash, and the knot which finishes it.

Work the fichu first, afterward the sash and knot, and join the latter to the fichu; in consequence of this knot at the back of the fichu it must be left open for a few rows or it would not sit well.

Materials.—Seven ounces of purple or any coloured single Berlin or eider wool, three ounces of black Andalusian wool, a long and a short crocheting hook, and three jet buttons to ornament the front.

Commence by working first the left side of the opening at the back of the fichu, and for this make a chain of 17.

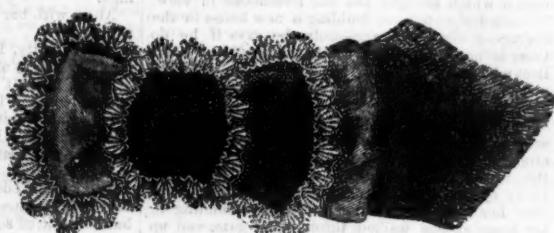
1st row.—Take up 16 st or loops on the 16 ch and wb (work back).

2nd row.—Take up 14 loops, then increase one by taking up the chain between the 14th and 15th loops. Take up the 15th loop, increase in the next chain; take up the 16th loop and the end loop, wb.

3rd row.—Increase 1 s as in the 2nd row before the last s in the row.

4th row.—Increase 1 s before the two last s in the row.

5th row.—As the 3rd.



FICHU.—No. 1.

33rd to 46th rows.—Decrease 1 on each side every row. Decrease by working the 2 first and 2 last s together.

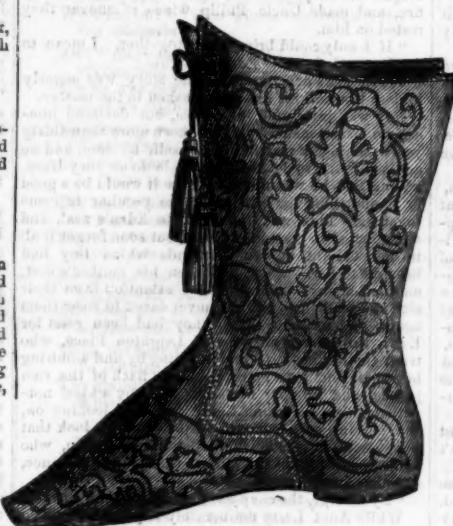
47th row.—Take up all the loops, wb 18, taking, of course, the 2 end s together.

48th row.—Take up these loops just worked, decrease at the end, and wb 14.

49th row.—Decrease at the end, and wb 10.

50th row.—Take up the loops worked last, wb 6.

51st row.—Take up these loops, wb all on the needle.



BRAIDED BOOT.—No. 3.

6th row.—As the 4th.

7th row.—As the 3rd.

8th row.—Plain, and fasten off.

Cast on 17 ch, again work over these few rows, taking care to make all the increasing on the right hand side of the work instead of the left. Work to the 8th row.

9th row.—Take up all the loops excepting the last, then take the piece worked first; take up the last loop of the piece being worked and the first loop of the piece worked together; take up the rest of the loops on the piece and wb.

10th and 11th rows.—Increase after the 1st and 2nd s and before the two last s in the row. Wb at the end of the row; make 8 ch.

12th row.—Take up these 3 ch in last row as 3 extra loops; take up all the loops, and at the end of the row cast 3 extra s on the needle as if you were knitting. Wb these 3 extra s as 3 loops, and all the rest on the needle.

13th and 14th rows.—Increase 2 on each side.

15th to 17th rows.—Increase 1 on each side.

18th row.—Increase 2 on each side.

19th to 23rd rows.—Increase 1 on each side.

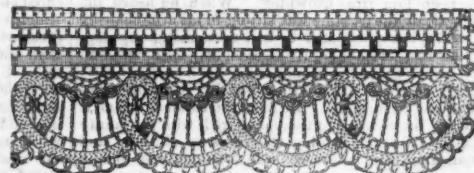
24th row.—Plain.

25th and 26th rows.—Increase 1 on each side.

27th row.—Plain.

28th to 31st rows.—Increase 1 on each side.

32nd row.—Plain. In the next row begin to decrease for the shoulder.



POINT LACE.—No. 5.

2nd row.—* 1 dc in the middle of the next 3 ch, 3 ch, 1 long in the middle of the next 3 ch, 3 ch, 1 dc in the middle of the next 3 ch, 1 ch; repeat from *.

3rd row.—1 long on each of the next 3 ch on the long of last row, then the next 3 ch, 1 dc on the 1 ch of inst row.

The sash.—Cast on 28 chain; work the length desired, and finish at the end with a point by working off two less each row; then work round a row of double crochet with black, then one with colour, add the border, and at the end add a purple fringe.

Work a little piece for the knot quite plain. Sew the buttons on in front, and make a loop of wool to fasten them with.

LEIGHTON HALL.

CHAPTER XLVI.

WHEN they came in sight of Uncle Philip's residence Edna directed Aunt Letty's attention to it. "That is the house," she said—as they turned a corner which brought the old farm-house in view, "Uncle Philip talks of building a new house in the spring—a Gothic cottage—only, he says if he do there is nobody to live in it but himself and Aunt Bucky."

"The servant, you mean," Aunt Letty said, rather crisply.

As one of the ponies shied a little just then, Edna said no more of the Gothic cottage, but gave her attention to her horses, until they drew up before the brown, unpretentious building, which Aunt Letty eyed sharply, keeping her veil closely drawn over her face, and feeling a decided trembling in her knees as she walked through the gate, and up to the front door, where she intended waiting till Edna could tie her ponies, and was ready to usher her in.

But, greatly to her surprise, the door swung open, seemingly by itself, for she saw no living being; only a voice—which seemed to come from behind the door, and to be a little smothered—said to her:

"Walk in, Letty, and make yourself at home."

Then she walked in. As the owner of the voices emerged from behind the door, and offered her his hand, she said:

"How do you do, Philip?" as naturally as if it had been yesterday they parted, instead of thirty years before.

Poor Uncle Philip had been quite as much troubled on the subject of his wardrobe as Aunt Letty had been with hers. He wanted to look decent for the wedding, and not disgrace Doty's grand relations, and asked Edna where Roy had his clothes made. "Wasn't it in London, and why couldn't he go there as well as anywhere else?"

Accordingly the old man went alone to London, from which place he returned so metamorphosed that Edna scarcely knew him, so changed was he in appearance that he had excited some very natural curiosity, as he walked home arrayed in his new suit of clothes, which made him look very trim and youthful, with his turn-over collar, his necktie and new hat. Even his shoes were town made; and he looked very nice and very much ashamed as he hurried towards home, glad to be out of sight of the curious, impertinent boys, and wondering what they would say "to his t'other suit." He asked Edna how he looked, and seemed greatly pleased with her commendation of his personal appearance.

"I had a mind to dye my hair," he said, "but settled I wouldn't make a fool of myself. 'Tain't very gray, is it?"

"Oh, no, it's quite right for you. I'm so glad you did not dye it. I like it just as it is," Edna said, passing her hand caressingly over the iron-gray locks and never dreaming why all this change had been made by her eccentric uncle, or suspecting how nervous and excited he was on the day when Aunt Letty was expected.

She had asked him to accompany her to the station, but he had declined on some plea or other, and she had gone alone, while he stole into his room and donned his second-best suit, and put on one of his new neckties, and indulged in cuffs and wrist-links, and a white pocket-handkerchief, which he grasped in his hand as tightly as if it had been the spar which was to keep him from drowning. When he heard the whistle of the train he was sitting in his arm-chair by the fire, but quick, as if he had been shot, he sprang to his feet, exclaiming: "Heaven help me!" while in the palms of his hands and under his hair were little drops of perspiration wrung out by sheer nervousness and excitement. He saw the carriage when it turned the corner, but the young girl, with the jaunty hat and feather, holding the reins so skilfully and managing the horses so well, was nothing to him then. He only saw the tall, erect woman at her side, with the veil over her face and the rich furs about her shoulders.

When he opened the door Edna was close behind—so close, indeed, that she saw the look in Uncle Philip's face, and heard Aunt Letty's "How do you do, Philip?" and in an instant the truth flashed upon her, taking her breath away and rendering her speechless for a moment. Then, confronting them both, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Uncle Philip—Aunt Letty—I never knew—I never guessed—I never thought—"

"Well, don't think now, or if you do keep your thoughts to yourself," was Aunt Letty's characteristic reply as she walked into the sitting-room with

Uncle Philip following her, flourishing his handkerchief almost in her face in his zeal to make her welcome.

"Come upstairs to my room," Edna said, glad to escape from the curious eyes of the fidgety little man.

Aunt Letty accompanied her niece upstairs, while Uncle Philip said softly to himself:

"Yes, yes; good-lookin' craft."

He nodded at the figure-head of the tall clock in the corner as if that knew and appreciated his feelings.

Alone with her aunt, Edna could not refrain from saying:

"Aunt Letty, it was Uncle Philip, I saw it in his face; I know it all; I wish, I believe—"

"You needn't wish or believe anything, for as true as you do I'll take myself home in double-quick time. I ain't quite so foolish as that. Philip Overton and I have had our day, and lost it. Let us alone," Aunt Letty said so fiercely that Edna came to a sudden halt with her intentions of doing something for this odd, lonely couple whose lives had once come so near to flowing in the same channel, but had drifted so far apart.

They were wholly unlike each other, Edna thought as she watched them closely when, during the evening, with the first reserve worn off, they talked together of old friends, whom, in their youth, they had known, and who were now many of them dead and gone. It was strange what a softening effect the talking of these old times had upon Aunt Letty, who hardly seemed herself as she sat there with the fire-light falling on her smooth, black hair, and giving a rosy tinge to her cheek. Her eyes were always bright, and they shone now with much of their old fire, and made Uncle Philip wince whenever they rested on him.

"If I only could bring them together. I mean to get Roy to help me," Edna thought.

When next day Roy came the story was eagerly told to him and his assistance asked in the matter.

Roy was interested, of course, but declared himself no match-maker. He had been more than thirty years making a match for himself, he said, and he advised Edna to let the old couple do as they liked, adding that he was not at all sure it would be a good or happy thing for two people so peculiar to come together. This was a damper to Edna's zeal, and she affected to pout for a little, but soon forgot it all in her delight at the diamonds which Roy had brought to her. They had been his mother's first, and had always attracted great attention from their size and brilliancy, but she never cared to wear them again, and at her request they had been reset for Edna, the young mistress of Leighton Place, who tried their effect with Roy standing by and admiring her sparkling face more than the flash of the rich jewels, and proving his admiration by a kiss, notwithstanding that Aunt Letty was there, looking on, and pursing up her mouth with so queer a look that Roy kissed her too, whereupon Uncle Philip, who had come in just in time to see the last performance, exclaimed in an aside:

"By George, the chap has more pluck than I have."

While Aunt Letty deliberately wiped and rubbed her cheek, and said:

"I'd as soon kiss a piece of sole leather."

They were very gay and merry at Uncle Philip's during the few days which preceded the wedding, and nothing was wanting to complete their happiness but the presence of Maude and John. From them, however, a kindly message came on the very morning of the bridal, and Edna read it in her bridal robes, with Roy's arm around her waist and Roy's face looking over her shoulder as she read. Only a few friends were invited to the luncheon given after the ceremony, but all were welcome to go to the church, which was filled to its utmost capacity. Ruth Gardner presided at the organ, and did herself great credit with the music she made as the party went up the aisle: Uncle Philip and Edna, looking beautiful in her travelling dress of navy blue, followed by Roy and Aunt Letty, whose rich black silk swept far behind her, and was stepped on two or three times by those who came in her train. Mrs. Churchill was not there; she was far from well, and as there was to be a grand reception at Leighton that evening she preferred to receive her children at home, and stayed to see that everything was in readiness for them when they arrived. Uncle Philip was the merriness and youngest of the party, which finally proceeded to Leighton. They reached there just as the twilight shadows were beginning to fall; and the stars to look out upon another Christmas Eve.

It was not a crowded party, but very pleasant and select, and Edna moved among her guests like some little fairy, clad in her bridal robes of sheeny satin and fleecy lace, with only pearls upon her neck and arms, and the wedding ring upon her finger. It was a far different bridal from her first one, and she felt

it to be so, and wondered if it was wicked for her to be so happy in the love of the man who scarcely quitted her side for a moment, when just a little way from the bright lights and sounds of festivity Charlie lay sleeping with the Christmas moon shining on his grave. Roy, too, thought of Georgie, thought of her, too, with a softer, tenderer regret than Edna could give to Charlie, for he only knew of the good there had been in her; the bad was buried with her, and he remembered her as she had seemed at the last—amiable, loving, and good. But he could not wish to exchange his bride for her. Once when they were standing a little out of sight, and a thought of what had almost been came over him, he involuntarily wound his arm tightly around Edna, and drew her to him in a quick, passionate embrace, as if he would thus assure himself that she was a reality and not a myth, which would vanish away from his side.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Two years later, and again the Christmas chimes were ringing from many a tower, and the words, "Peace on earth, good will to men," were sung by many a voice, while many a welcome greeting was given to returning friends, and to none a warmer or more welcome one than was extended to John and Maude, who came from their home to keep Christmas at Leighton, where Edna presided as mistress, with no shadow on her bright face or sorrow in her heart. Hers had been a happy life since the day Roy called her wife, and no ripple, however small, had broken the smooth surface of the matrimonial sea on which she sailed so pleasantly. All in all to each other, neither she nor Roy had cared to leave their pleasant home; but had remained there all the time, with the exception of an occasional trip to London. With this arrangement Mrs. Churchill was well content. Edna was more to her now than she was at first, and she, too, had adopted the pet name which Maude first gave to Edna and which suited her so well. "Dotty" she called her always, and her voice showed how precious to her was the little sunny-faced girl who answered back so pleasantly, "What is it, mother?" for Edna felt that she had indeed found a mother at last, and there was perfect confidence and love between them.

"Oh, I am so happy that I sometimes tremble lest I should wake some morning and find it all a dream," Edna said to Maude as she led the way to the suite of rooms which had been prepared for Mrs. John, with her nurse and babies, for Maude had reached that honour, and the cares of maternity sat very gracefully upon her.

"Edna Churchill" she had named the expected stranger, and had held all sorts of consultations with Mrs. Roy concerning the christening robes and the christening dinner, and had talked quite confidently of what her daughter would and would not do. How, then, was she amazed and confounded when the result proved to be twins, and both boys! Two great, red-faced, sturdy boys, at whom she looked askance, from whom she shrank at first as from something appalling and of which she was ashamed.

"What will John say? Oh, dear, oh, dear!" she cried; "he will never get over it, never!" and she really looked and felt greatly distressed when John's step was heard outside the door. "Oh, John, I am so mortified; I shall die if you tease me," she said, covering her face with her hands, while John, with a most comical expression on his face, looked first at his two sons, then bending over Maude drew her hands from her face and told her she was "a little brick."

They named them John and Roy, but the father always called them Jack and Gil. They were spending their first Christmas at Leighton, and Roy, it was thought, looked a little enviously at them as they crowded and kicked in their nurse's arms, or buried their hands in their father's hair.

Mr. and Mrs. Freeman Barton were there also, the latter still in black for her darling Georgie, whom she talked about a great deal, wishing so much that she could be with them as she used to be.

"Not that I wish you away, my dear," she would add, laying her hand on Edna's shoulder. "Of course I do not wish harm to you, or that things with you and Roy were otherwise; only I miss poor Georgie so much."

Maude was a great comfort to the lonely woman and in some degree took Georgie's place in her affections. She certainly had taken her place at Oakwood, where she spent a great deal of her time, and where Mr. Burton stayed longer when she was there with her boys. He called himself grandpapa to them, while his wife is the grandmother, and it is said that in his private drawer there is a will giving all his worldly possessions to his beloved niece, Mrs. John Heyford, and her heirs for ever; so John is doing well in a worldly point of view, and is talking of building a handsome country seat, where Maude

should keep her ponies and her children, and be what she desires to be, a farmer's wife in comfortable circumstances.

Uncle Philip was also at Leighton keeping the Christmas holidays, playing with the twins, and rallying Edna on Maude's surprising success. But Aunt Letty is not there.

"Got the rheumatism and is cross," Uncle Philip said.

Then Edna looked at him so inquiringly that he replied:

"No use, no use—and I may as well tell you that I've made a prodigious fool of myself and been after that snapdragon again. She looked so trim and neat when you were married that my heart kept thumpin' under my jacket, and I was so lonesome with you and Maude both gone for good that I—yes—well—I—yes, yes—I asked her again, and told her I'd build a Gothic cottage, and we might take comfort yet, for it was lone-some and awful cold winter nights, and she called me foolish, and told me to let her alone; and I did, but kept thinkin', and hankerin', and rememberin' how slim and straight she looked, and I've begun the Gothic house, you know, and it will be finished in the spring, and—and—and—yes, yes—the upshot is, I went out there two weeks ago and found her on crutches and tried her again, but no go. She didn't like me, she said, and she was lonesome at times, but she wouldn't be a laughing-stock for nobody, and she gave me the sack the second time, and I've give her up for good." merrily on.

Now, leaving Leighton, where all was joyous and happy, we glace for a moment upon poor Aunt Letty, who, at her solitary dinner of roast chicken, lit one single tear roll down her cheeks as she thought of the party at Leighton, then of herself, so lonely and forlorn. As the night deepened without, and the shadows crept into every corner of the room, she tried, by caressing her tabby cat, and watching the firelight flickering on the wall, to get up a little enthusiasm for her surroundings, and believe that she was happy and content. But it would not do; there was a craving in her heart for other companionship than that of her cat and cow, and, putting the former from her lap, she hobbled to the window, looking out into the night, thinking of the Gothic cottage, and the man who had offered it to her acceptance, and called her Letty as he did so.

"It might be better than living here alone, and it might be worse," she soliloquised. "But he is so short, and fat, and stumpy. No, I don't believe I can. Tabby and I'll try it a spell longer anyway, then, if he is foolish enough to ask again, I—don't—know; it's about an even chance," and the good woman went back to her chair by the fire, and there we will leave her, not knowing any better than the reader whether that Gothic cottage will ever have a mistress or not.

THE END.

FACETIE.

IT is a remarkable fact that however well young ladies may be versed in grammar, very few are enabled to decline matrimony.

LAW is like a sieve; you may see through it, but you must be considerably reduced before you can get through it.

THE difference between a country and a city greenhorn is, that the one would like to know everything, and the other thinks he can tell him.

"BONES," said a wag to a milkman, "you ought to roof them cows of yours." "What for?" asked the other. "To keep the water from running into the milk," replied the wag.

A DELICATE COMPLIMENT.

Waiter: "Let's see—call-a-head, I believe, sir. No! Beg pard'n, you're—oh, you're an underdone chump!"—Fun.

ANGLING EXTRAORDINARY.

Customer (in a great hurry): "A small box of gentles, please. And look sharp! I want to catch a 'bus!"—Punch.

PUZZLING HER TRADESMEN.—The other day Mrs. Malaprop rather astonished the chemist with whom she deals by asking him for some mitigated spirits of wine (for her egg-boiler). It was some time before it dawned upon him that she meant "methylated."—Punch.

A LITTLE FAILING.

NERVOUS OLD LADY: "Now, cabman, you're sure your horse is quiet? What's he laying back his ears like that for? Look!"

Cabby: "Oh, that's only her fomi-nine cur'osity, m'm. She likes to hear where she's a goin' to!"—Punch.

CHEAP EDUCATION.

It is as dangerous to have a little money as it is to possess a little knowledge if it subjects ladies

to such propositions as are contained in the following advertisement, which lately appeared in a daily paper:

TO LADIES OF LIMITED INCOME.—A Comfortable and Happy HOME to any Lady who would pay the sum of £5. or 20*l.* per annum, and devote Two or Three Hours daily to the Education of Two Little Girls.—Address D. B., &c.

The advertiser is evidently of an economical turn of mind, and we may expect to see, from the same paper, quite as reasonable an advertisement for "A Cook, to pay 20*l.* per annum, and devote herself, for four or five hours daily, to the preparation of the food of the family. N.B.—To find her own beer and washing." The advertiser ought, evidently, to be on one of the School Boards, where his economical notions may be usefully devoted to obtaining governnesses for less than nothing, and thus keep down the education rate!—*The Period.*

CHRISTMAS TIME.

ONCE again old Christmas comes,
To crown the closing year
With holidays, and happy homes,
And gifts, and goodly cheer.
Old Christmas, with his icy breath,
And out-door garb of snow,
Within puts on the holy wreath,
And bids the yule log glow.
We hail his presence, for he brings
Our absent loved ones near;
And every joy bell that he rings
Is music to the ear.
Music that tells of "peace on earth,"
Peace, and "good will to men,"
Wrought out by Him whose wondrous birth
We celebrate again.

And "glory unto God most high!"
Whose Son, in mercy given,
For us was born, for us to die;
That we might live in heaven.

Hail festive season! joyfully more:
We welcome thee once more:
Still shall thy coming greeted be,
As 'twas in days of yore.

For nearly nineteen centuries,
In regal annual state,
Thou hast brought hallowed memories
To humble and to great.

Dear mem'ries of that olden time
When, with their offerings sweet,
The wise men of an eastern clime
Kneel'd at Emmanuel's feet.

Wise, for they followed from afar
To Bethlehem's manger bed,
The guiding of that Heaven-sent star,
Which to the Saviour led.

And myrrh, and frankincense, and gold,
Before the Child outpoured,
In whom faith taught them to behold
The everlasting Lord.

And may we ne'er forget to raise,
From hearts of grateful love,
The sweeter frankincense of praise,
Up to His throne above! J. C. L.—
Pawsey's Pocket Book, 1871.

GEMS

A MAN'S best fortune, or his worst, is his wife. SLANDER is the revenge of a coward, and dissimulation his defence.

THE bleakest adversity may bear us to prosperity. The Arctic wanderer may be floated into a warm latitudo on an island of ice.

THE longer we live, and the more we think, the higher value we learn to put on the friendship and tenderness of parents and friends.

WHAT a world of gossip would be prevented if it was only remembered that a person who tells you of the faults of others, intends to tell others of your faults.

THOSE who reprove us are more valuable friends than those who flatter us. True progress requires either candid friends or severe enemies.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TO DRESS SPINACH.—First pick the leaves from the stem, and when well washed throw them into a large saucepan of boiling water rather salt; boil them fast for about ten minutes, and strain on the back of a sieve or cullender; press them in a napkin and squeeze out all the water that remains. The spinach must be then put into a stewpan with a little butter, pepper, and salt; and about ten

minutes before serving placed on the stove to be made hot; add nearly half a teacupful of cream; pile it on the dish and serve.

BURNT CREAM.—Boil half a pint of milk, together with a bay leaf and a piece of cinnamon; add to it the yolks of four eggs well beaten, 4-pint of cream, a spoonful of flour, and fine sugar sufficient to make it sweet; keep it stirring over a gentle fire until it is as thick as a custard; then pour it into your dish, strew it over with sugar, and brown it with a salamander.

A PHYSICIAN in Paris has discovered that the deadly nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*), employed carefully, is a most valuable specific against smallpox. Dr. Severus urgently recommends it as a preventive against this disease, which since the siege has made such ravages.

STATISTICS.

STATISTICS OF THE ITALIAN RAILWAYS.—Throughout the kingdom of Italy there were, on the 31st December, 1868, 3,580 miles of railway in operation, 720 miles in course of construction, and 865 miles sanctioned, making in all, when completed, 5,235 miles. Of the length opened, the lines of the company of Upper Italy numbered 1,410 miles; the Roman States, 900; the South, 880; Calabria and Sicily, 120; the Papal States, 210; whilst others had 40, making the total of 3,580 miles. The cost of construction had amounted to 50,000,000*l.* sterling. The total receipts from all sources were, in 1868, 3,520,512*l.*; in 1867, 3,215,551*l.*; the expenditure, in 1868, 1,994,018*l.*; in 1867, 1,979,525*l.* The number of persons of all classes who travelled, in 1868, were 43,866,960; in 1867, 40,664,952. The company of Upper Italy carried, in 1868, 25,236,100 persons; the South, 6,033,785; the Roman States, 11,463,944.

MISCELLANEOUS.

RED trousers are to be no longer worn in the Belgian Army.

The Duke of Wellington has presented to Wellington College Wyatt's magnificent bust of his father.

EARL ROSSLYN has been installed Grand Master of Freemasons for Scotland, in the room of Earl Dalhousie.

The Musical Standard hears that a San Francisco organ-grinder recently died worth 100,000 dollars, leaving no heir but a monkey.

The Grand Lodge of Freemasons has expressed its disapproval of the use of the new postal cards for Masonic purposes.

The French Suez Canal Company will be turned into an English joint-stock enterprise, with the Duke of Sutherland as the chairman.

The silk trade of Lyons, says a French paper, is sending immense quantities of goods abroad under the apprehension of a visit from the Prussians.

THERE are at present in Germany upwards of 25,000 widows, and 120,000 fatherless children, owing to the losses in the Landwehr corps.

The Admiralty has informed Mr. Griffin, C.E., that it is not at present deemed advisable to entertain his proposal for raising Her Majesty's late ship "Captain."

The two Devizes letter carriers will this week appear in uniform for the first time; the inhabitants having subscribed to put them in an attire by which they may be easily distinguished.

It is estimated that there are about three-quarters of a million of persons in the Diocese of London, nominally attached to the Church of England, who rarely if ever enter a place of worship.

An order has been issued directing that efforts shall be made for the immediate enlistment of 1,500 drivers for the Royal Artillery. The standard has been reduced to 5ft. 4in., the minimum height. Gunners are also required to an almost unlimited extent, the standard being 5ft. 7in.

INSTRUCTIONS have been issued that recruiting for all regiments serving in India is to cease for the present. Strenuous exertions are being made to raise the 20,000 additional men required for the army at home. Until this is accomplished, it is not probable that recruiting will be re-opened for Indian regiments.

MARSHAL BAZAINE has taken a villa in Cassel till Easter. Madame Bazaine, a handsome lady of about 25 years of age, has brought with her her two children—one three years and the other 18 months old. Bazaine's six officers of "ordnance"—a general, a colonel, two captains, and two lieutenants—will remain near him.

WE are informed that unusual activity has been displayed at the Government military clothing establishment at Finsbury. Shelves which a few weeks ago supported scarcely anything but dust or a few sealed patterns now groan under the weight of countless suits of uniform.

Hurrah! for the Holly.

A CAROL FOR CHRISTMAS.

VOICE.

Con Spirito.

Hur - rah!.... for the Hol - ly, the Hol - ly, the prince of the
mer - ry Christ - mas.

PIANO.

fp *cres.* *p*

trees,..... That glows..... in the sun - - shine, and waves, and waves in the breeze;..... Let the for - - est in
tide,..... We'll deck..... with its bar - - ries our bright, our bright fire - side,..... And we'll thank..... our

scherzo.

sum - mer with splen - dour shine,..... The ev - - er-green Hol - ly a - lone be..... mine,..... The
God that in win - ter's chill,..... There's some - - thing that's charm - ing to cheer us..... still,..... There's

Minore. espress.

ev - - er - green Hol - - ly for ev - er, for ev - er be mine..... Rich - - er and grand - er
some - - thing that's charm - ing to cheer us, to cheer us still..... Change - - less ev - er the

cres. *f* *p*

o - - thers may be, No chang - es you'll find In the Hol - ly, the Hol - ly green tree. Then hur - rah!.... for the
Hol - ly grows, In match - - less beau - ty a - midst, a - midst the snows. Then hur - rah!.... for the

lento.

colla voce.

Ho - ly, the ev - er-green Hol - ly for me; The Hol - ly for me, The Hol - ly for me, The Hol - ly, the Hol - ly for me.....

cres.